

"This one is a shocker."

— Major Spoilers

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES **THE AVENGERS**

AARON • GARRÓN • MARESCA • CURIEL



ENTER THE PHOENIX

MARVEL

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

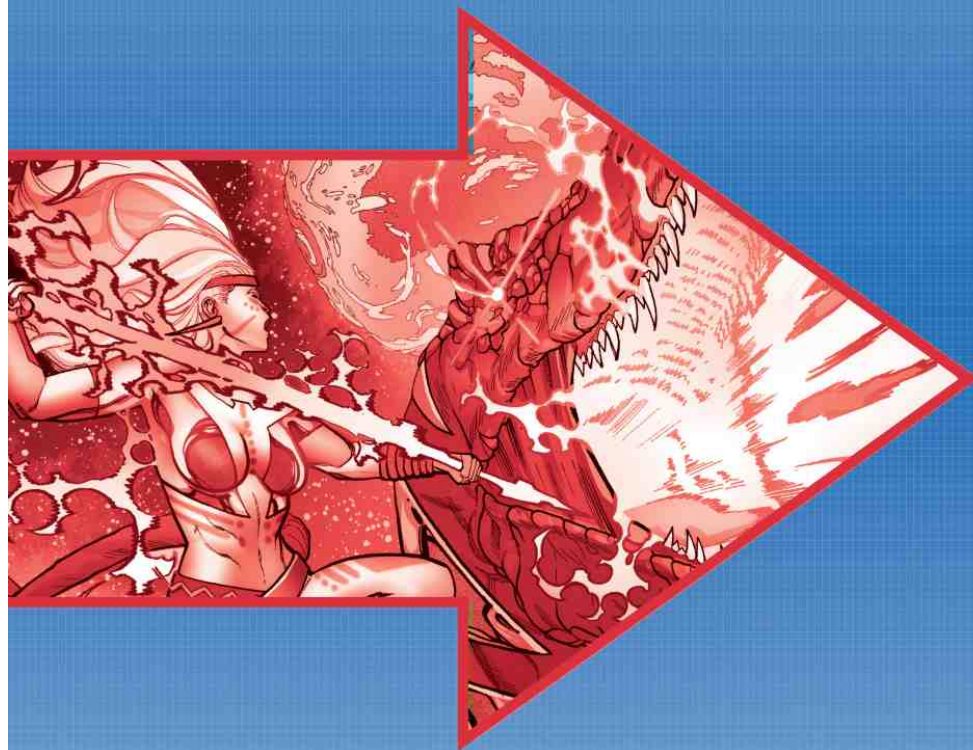
THE AVENGERS



ENTER THE
PHOENIX

AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER, WHEN EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES FOUND THEMSELVES UNITED AGAINST A COMMON THREAT. ON THAT DAY, THE AVENGERS WERE BORN, TO FIGHT THE FOES NO SINGLE SUPER HERO COULD WITHSTAND.

THE FIERY COSMIC FORCE KNOWN AS THE PHOENIX HAS INHABITED COUNTLESS MORTAL HOSTS OVER THE MILLENNIA. THE PHOENIX FORCE'S HISTORY ON EARTH DATES BACK TO THE VERY DAWN OF HUMAN – AND MUTANT – LIFE, OVER ONE MILLION YEARS AGO.



EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES **THE AVENGERS** ENTER THE PHOENIX

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ONE MILLION YEARS AGO.

MY FIRST
MEMORY IS
OF RUSTLING
FEATHERS.

AND
HUNGRY
EYES.



LOOKING DEEP
INTO ME. INTO
MY MARROW.

I'D ONLY JUST
BEEN BORN, BUT I
STILL REMEMBER THE
SMELL OF *DEATH*
FROM THAT DAY.

THE CHARRED, COLD
STENCH OF IT, ALL
AROUND ME.



MY FIRST
MEMORY WAS
OF THE
BURNT PLACE.





I DON'T REMEMBER MY PARENTS. I JUST KNOW THEY LEFT ME THERE, BLOODY FRESH FROM THE WOMB.

THEY THREW ME AWAY AFTER BARELY ONE LOOK AT ME.



THEY LEFT ME IN THE BURNT PLACE TO DIE.

GRRRRR



IN THIS RAW, PRIMORDIAL WORLD, FEAR IS THE MOST PLENTIFUL OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES. FEAR GROWS LIKE THE FIERCEST OF WEEDS.

RRRW

RREEEE

CHANGE SEEMS EVER ARDUOUS, BUT FEAR ALWAYS COMES EASY.



SOMETIMES ALL IT TAKES IS A BIT OF RED.



THE BONES WERE OF OTHERS
WHO WERE BORN DIFFERENT
IN SOME SIMPLE WAY,
LIKE ME WITH MY RED HAIR.

BORN A DIFFERENT SHADE,
DIFFERENT SIZE, TOO MANY FINGERS
ON ONE HAND, EYES THAT
DIDN'T WORK THE USUAL WAY.



OR MAYBE THEIR DIFFERENCE
CAME FROM WORSHIPPING THE
MOON INSTEAD OF THE SUN.

LOVING A MAN INSTEAD OF A
WOMAN, PREFERRING LEAFY GREENS
TO CHARRED MAMMOTH MEAT.

AMONG TRIBES ALL OVER
THE AREA, PEOPLE WHO
WERE DIFFERENT WERE LEFT
IN THE BURNT PLACE TO DIE.



**TEN YEARS
LATER.**

EXCEPT I
DIDN'T DIE.

I'M THE ONLY THING THAT
EVER CAME TO THAT
WRETCHED, BLACKENED
WASTELAND WHERE NOTHING
EVER GROWS...

...TO LEARN
TO LIVE.

RRRRGGGGH!!!





I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE WOLVES SAVED ME.

YEARS LATER, I'D TRY ASKING THEM. IN MY OWN WAY.

BUT WOLVES WRAP THEIR SECRETS UP DEEP AND TIGHT.

ONE OF THE MANY REASONS I'D COME TO LOVE THEM SO.



AS I GREW, BECOMING A PART OF THE WOLF PACK, I FOUND MYSELF RETURNING TO THE BURNT PLACE NOW AND THEN.

THOUGH NEVER FOR HUNTING.



NOT FOR MEAT AT LEAST.



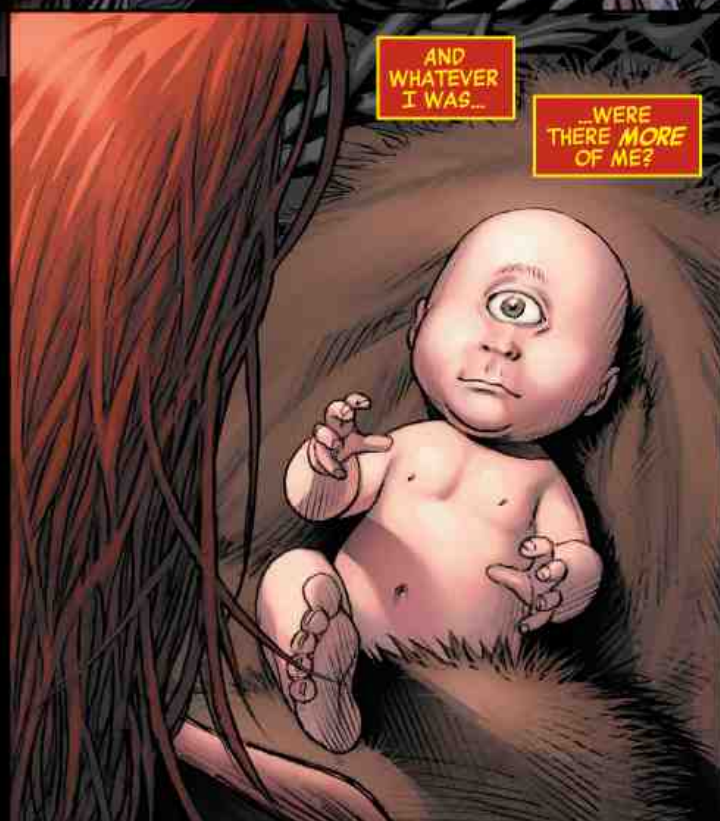
RRRRGGGH!!!

I KNEW
I WASN'T
A WOLF.

BUT I ALSO KNEW I
DIDN'T BELONG WITH
THE TRIBE WHO'D
ABANDONED ME.



SO WHAT WAS I, I
OFTEN WONDERED,
STARING UP AT THE
DISTANT FIRES IN
THE NIGHT SKY.



AND
WHATEVER
I WAS...

...WERE
THERE MORE
OF ME?



DON'T
HURT HIM.



I'LL
TAKE THE
CHILD.

HHRGH?

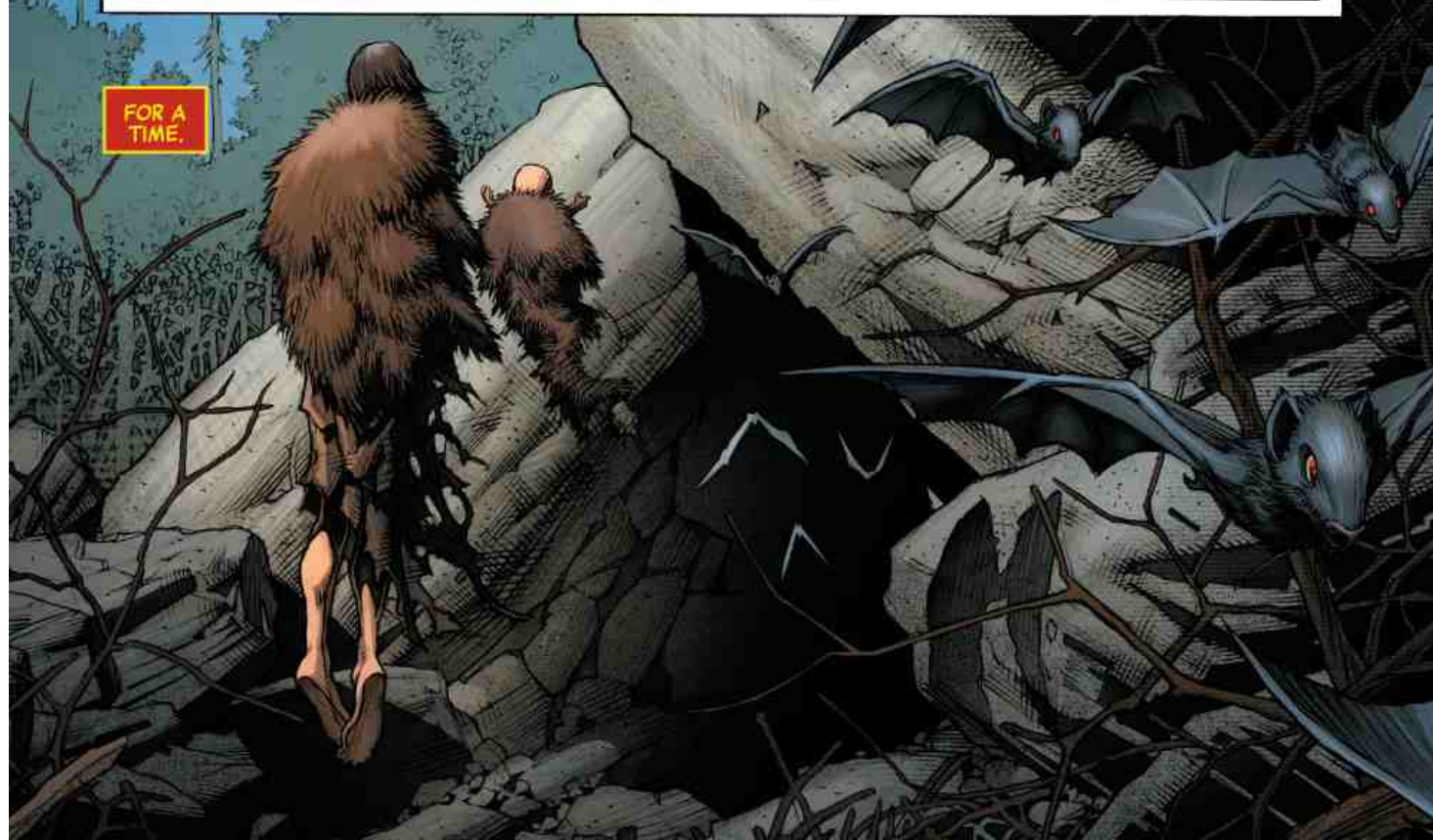
I DIDN'T
UNDERSTAND
WHAT I WAS
HEARING.

I'D NEVER
HEARD **WORDS**
SPOKEN BEFORE.



I ALSO DIDN'T
UNDERSTAND THAT
I WASN'T HEARING
THEM ON THE OUTSIDE.

I TOOK IT FOR SOME
SORT OF **DEVILRY**. AND
LIKE MY PARENTS,
I GAVE IN TO FEAR.



FOR A
TIME.



BUT WHEN WE CAN
OPEN OUR MINDS
TO THE AS-YET
UNEXPLORED, WE
MAY FIND OUR
APPREHENSION
GIVING WAY...



...TO
INTRIGUE.



WHAT IF I WASN'T
THE ONLY TWO-LEGGED
CREATURE WHO
WAS DIFFERENT?

WHAT IF SOMEWHERE,
I HAD A TRIBE OF MY
OWN? WOULD I KNOW
THEM IF I SAW THEM?

SOMETHING
TOLD ME I
WOULD.



YOU'RE
THE ONE
THE WOLVES
TOOK.



DON'T RUN.
I WON'T
HURT YOU.

THIS
CAVE IS A
SAFE PLACE. I
PROMISE
YOU.

YES, MY
VOICE IS INSIDE YOUR
HEAD. I APOLOGIZE FOR
THE INTRUSION. BUT IT'S
THE ONLY WAY I
CAN SPEAK.



AND WORDS
ARE SUCH A RARE
GIFT IN THIS WORLD,
NO MATTER HOW THEY'RE
DELIVERED. A GIFT YOU
DON'T POSSESS,
I SEE.

I HOPE YOU
CAN AT LEAST FEEL
THE PEACE AND THE
TRUTH BEHIND MY THOUGHTS.
AND THE REGRET AS WELL.
I'M AFRAID I MUST
OFFER YOU ANOTHER
APOLOGY.



I'M
SORRY I
DIDN'T HELP
YOU.

I WAS
WATCHING
WHEN YOU WERE
BROUGHT TO THE
BURNT PLACE AS A
BABY. I WAS TOO
AFRAID TO MOVE.
SUCH AS I
CAN.

BUT AFTER
YOU WERE TAKEN
BY THE WOLVES... I
VOWED TO NEVER
STAND BY AGAIN
AND WATCH ONE
OF US DIE.

I THOUGHT
THEY WOULD'VE
EATEN YOU. BUT
HERE YOU ARE,
BACK FROM
THE DEAD.

TELL ME,
GIRL WITH
THE HAIR LIKE
FIRE...

...WOULD
YOU LIKE TO
COME HOME
NOW?



I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND
HIS MIND-SOUNDS.
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND
EVEN THE IDEA OF WORDS.



BUT SOMEHOW
I COULD FEEL HIS
MEANING. AND I
JUST HOPED...

...THE WOLVES WOULD UNDERSTAND AS WELL.

THEY HOWLED FOR MANY DAYS WHEN I LEFT. AND THERE WOULD BE MANY NIGHTS TO COME WHEN I'D WISH I'D STAYED.

BUT I KNEW I HAD TO GO.



I KNEW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE...

IT'S OKAY. NO ONE WILL HURT YOU HERE. WE'RE YOUR TRIBE NOW, FIREHAIR.

NO MATTER WHERE YOU WERE FROM BEFORE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID ANYMORE. NONE OF US DO.



...I'D FOUND WHERE I BELONGED.

WE'RE THE TRIBE WITHOUT FEAR.





IN THIS NEW
TRIBE, WE WERE
ALL DIFFERENT.

BUT SOME WERE
MORE DIFFERENT
THAN OTHERS.

SOME COULD
DO AMAZING
THINGS.

THEY HADN'T BEEN
BORN THAT WAY. BUT
ONCE THE CHANGES
CAME OVER THEM,
THEY KNEW THAT'S
WHO THEY WERE
MEANT TO BE.



HE HELPED THEM SEE
THAT. HELPED THEM
CONTROL THEIR
UNIQUE ABILITIES.

I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME.
OR IF HE EVER HAD ONE. HE
WAS THE VOICE IN ALL OUR
HEADS. THE STRONGEST PERSON
ANY OF US HAD EVER KNOWN.

FIREHAIR?



FIREHAIR,
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

EHHRRGGGH!!!

I'VE COME TO CALL
HIM THE **HIGHWALKER**.
AND IF I'D NEVER
MET HIM, I KNOW
WITHOUT A DOUBT...

...I WOULD'VE
GONE **MAD**
THAT DAY.

THE DAY I FOUND
OUT JUST HOW
DIFFERENT I WAS.

THEY'RE
COMING.

TURNS OUT I WASN'T THE
ONLY ONE WHO'D MANAGED
TO **OVERCOME** THEIR FEAR.

THE TRIBES WHO'D BEEN
LEAVING THEIR UNWANTED
BABIES HERE TO DIE HAD
FINALLY REALIZED THAT
THERE WERE MORE THAN JUST
BUZZARDS SURVIVING
IN THE BURNT PLACE.

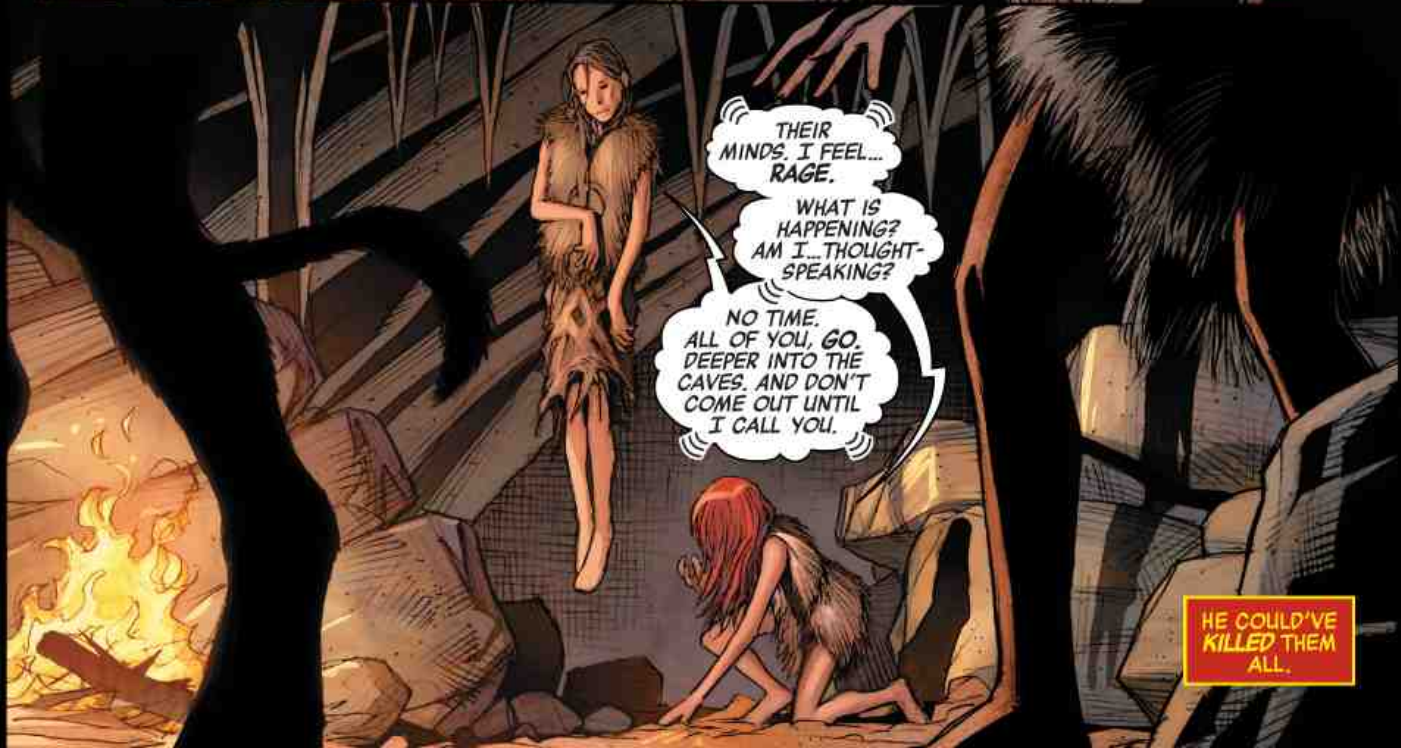


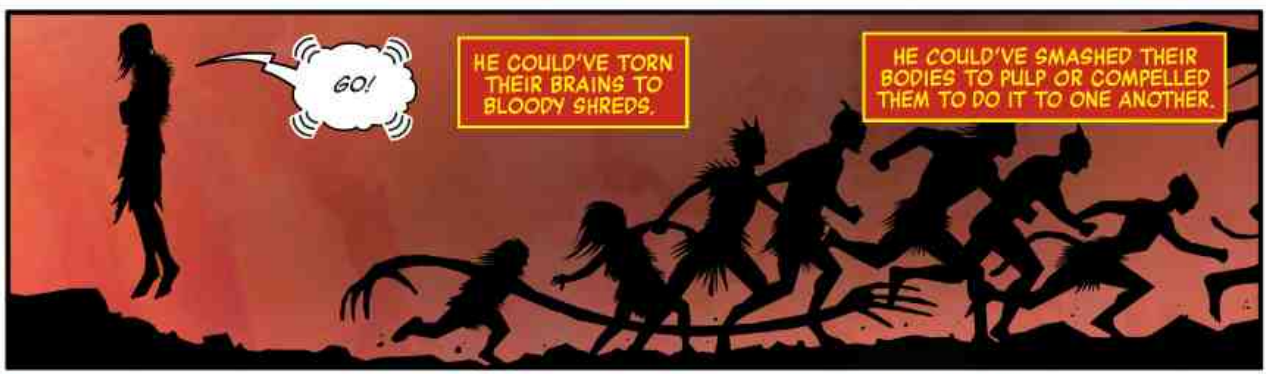
THEIR
MINDS. I FEEL...
RAGE.

WHAT IS
HAPPENING?
AM I...THOUGHT-
SPEAKING?

NO TIME.
ALL OF YOU, GO.
DEEPER INTO THE
CAVES. AND DON'T
COME OUT UNTIL
I CALL YOU.

HE COULD'VE
KILLED THEM
ALL.





GO!

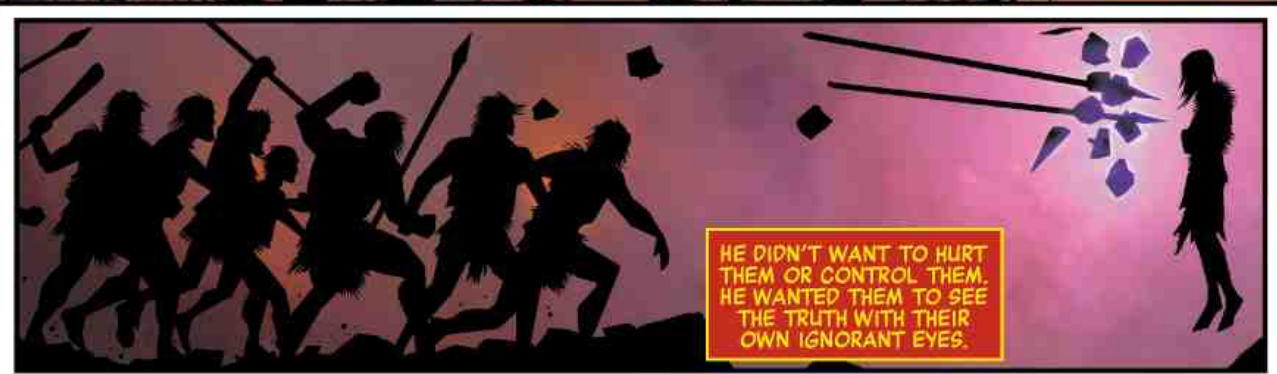
HE COULD'VE TORN
THEIR BRAINS TO
BLOODY SHREDS.

HE COULD'VE SMASHED THEIR
BODIES TO PULP OR COMPELLED
THEM TO DO IT TO ONE ANOTHER.



BUT THAT WASN'T WHO
THE HIGHWALKER WAS.

CALM YOUR
RAGE. WE ARE NOT
A THREAT TO YOU.
PLEASE, GO BACK TO
YOUR FORESTS AND
LEAVE US BE.



HE DIDN'T WANT TO HURT
THEM. OR CONTROL THEM.
HE WANTED THEM TO SEE
THE TRUTH WITH THEIR
OWN IGNORANT EYES.



AND MAYBE
THEY COULD'VE.

SO MUCH
HATRED. WHITE-HOT.
THEY WILL HUNT US
FOREVER. WE HAVE
TO--



IF IT
WEREN'T
FOR ME.

GGGGAAAAGH!



GRARRGH!

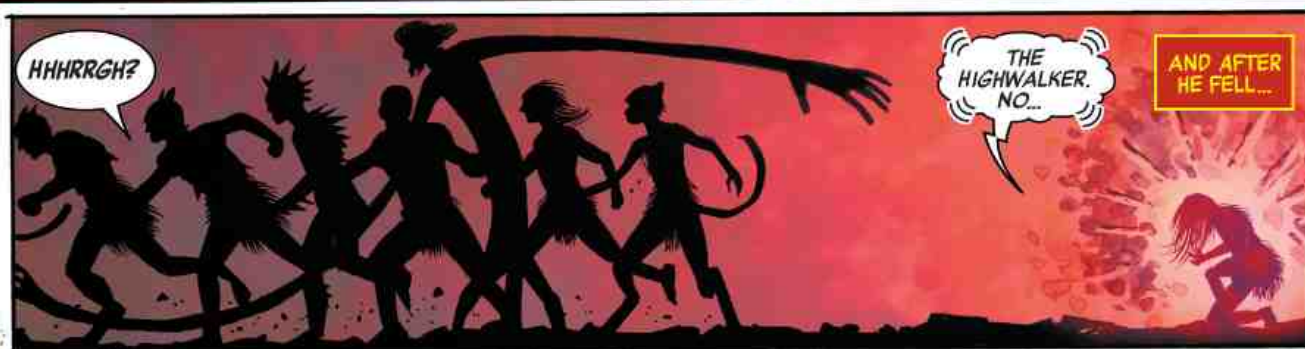
FIREHAIR,
NO, DO NOT HURT
THEM! WE CAN'T
GIVE IN TO THEIR
FEAR AND HATRED!
YOU HAVE
TO CONTROL
YOUR--



AAARRGGH!!!

I DISTRACTED HIM.

HE WAS SO BUSY
SAVING ME THAT
HE FORGOT TO
SAVE HIMSELF.



HHRRGH?

THE
HIGHWALKER.
NO...

AND AFTER
HE FELL...

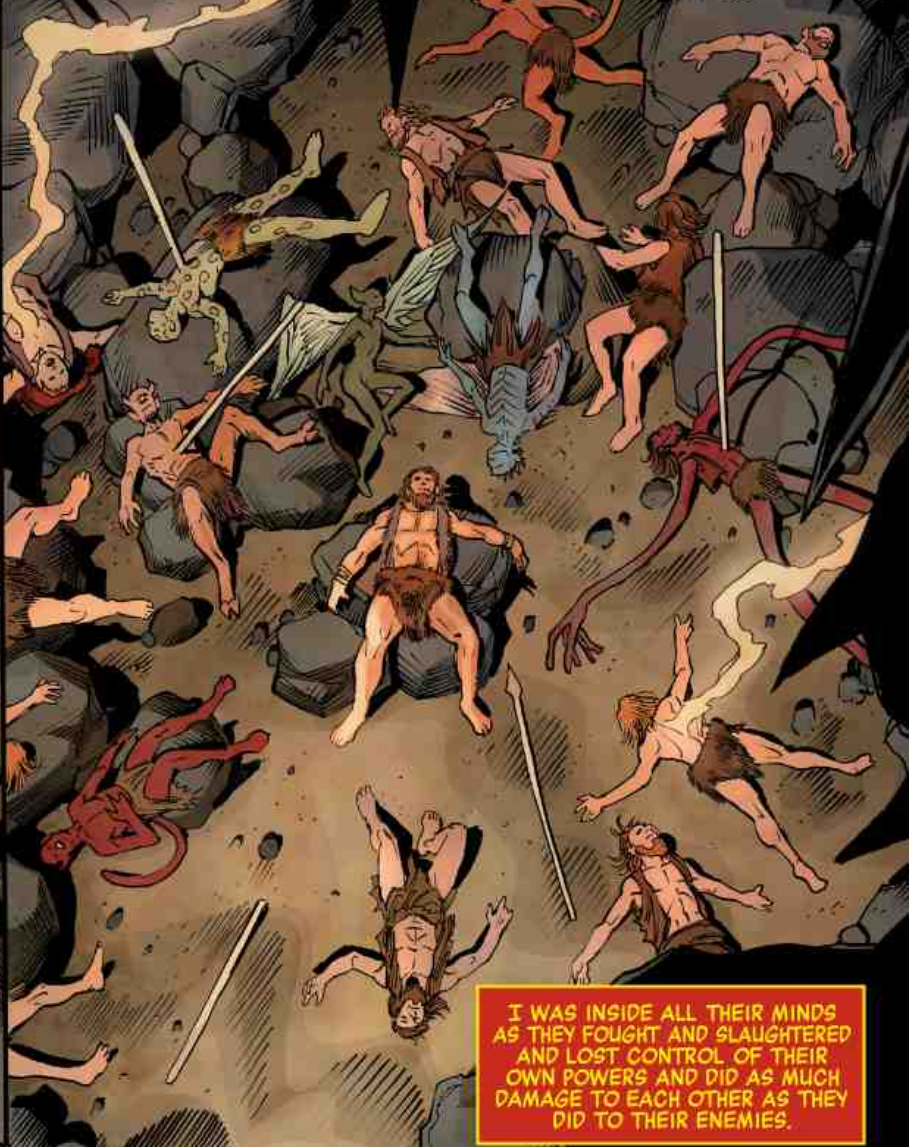


RRRRRRGGG!!!

THERE WAS NO
SAVING ANYONE.



I WAS IN HIS
MIND AS HE DIED.



I WAS INSIDE ALL THEIR MINDS
AS THEY FOUGHT AND SLAUGHTERED
AND LOST CONTROL OF THEIR
OWN POWERS AND DID AS MUCH
DAMAGE TO EACH OTHER AS THEY
DID TO THEIR ENEMIES.



MY PSYCHIC AWAKENING WAS A
NIGHT OF MURDER AND DEATH AND THE
WORST OF ALL POSSIBLE THOUGHTS.

I DON'T KNOW
HOW IT DIDN'T
KILL ME TOO.



I LAY THERE
FOR A LONG TIME
WISHING IT HAD.

THEN I STUMBLED
THROUGH THE
CARNAGE FOR HOURS,
WONDERING IF IT WAS
POSSIBLE TO KILL
YOURSELF WITH
YOUR OWN MIND.

AND REALIZING
THAT THE
HIGHWALKER HAD
BEEN WRONG
ABOUT ME...



NOTHING COMES
BACK FROM THE
DEAD. NOT REALLY.

NOT FOR
LONG AT
LEAST.



THE BUZZARDS WOULD GET
THEIR MEAL. THE ONE THEY
SHOULD'VE HAD ALL ALONG.



AS I LAY ON THAT BURNT GROUND,
SURRENDERING MY FLESH TO
FEATHERED DEATH, I SUDDENLY ASKED
MYSELF FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME...

...HOW DID THE
BURNT PLACE
COME TO BE?



WHAT WAS IT THAT
HAD BURNED THIS GROUND
SO LONG AGO?

BURNED IT IN SUCH A
WAY THAT NOTHING
HAD EVER GROWN
HERE AGAIN?



AND WHAT
WOULD
HAPPEN...

...IF IT EVER
CAME BACK.





THE PHOENIX HAD BURNED ITS
MARK INTO MY WORLD YEARS
BEFORE. INTO MANY WORLDS.

LIKE A
LURE.



MY RAW,
MUTANT
POWER DREW
IT TO ME.

ALONG WITH MY
POTENTIAL FOR
BLOODY RUIN.



IT SAW IN ME
THE CHANCE
TO DO WHAT
IT WAS BORN
TO DO.



TO BURN
PLANETS
TO ASH.



I WOULD'VE
MADE IT FEEL
JUSTIFIED IN
DOING SO.

MY LOSS, MY
HUNGER FOR
VENGEANCE.



AND THE CRUELTY
OF THE WORLD I
WAS BORN INTO.

MAN *DESERVED* TO
BURN. BEFORE HE
COULD PROSPER AND
EXPAND. AND BURN
HIM I WOULD.



THIS WORLD WAS
INFECTED. IMPURE.
EARTH'S CORRUPTED
EVOLUTION HAD TO
BE STOPPED. FOR
THE SAKE OF THE
UNIVERSE
AS A WHOLE.



IT WOULD'VE BEEN A RIGHTEOUS
FIRE. MAKING THE ENTIRE EARTH
INTO THE BURNT PLACE.

HUMANKIND WILL
NEVER KNOW HOW
CLOSE THEY CAME TO
EXTINCTION WHILE
STILL IN THEIR CRIB.

YOU...
YOU SAVED
ME FROM THE
BUZZARDS.



AND THAT THEY WERE
SAVED...BY THE LOVE
OF A WOLF.

BUT
NOW...I'M
THE BUZZARD,
AREN'T I?

I CAN...
BE BETTER
THAN THAT.

CAN'T
I?



"THE WORLD
CAN BE BETTER
THAN THAT."

RRGGH,
MOVE, YOU
BASTARD!



HHRRRG!
YOU STUBBORN
CHUNK OF TROLL-
DAMNED URU...

...NEVER
SHOULD'VE PUT
THAT BLASTED
MOTHER STORM
INSIDE YOU...*



MOVE,
MJOLNIR,
YOU MISERABLE
MALLET! YOUR
ALL-FATHER
COMMANDS
IT!

ASGARD IS
UNDER ATTACK!
AND NOTHING WE
HAVE CAN SEEM
TO STOP--

*IN MIGHTY THOR (2015) #12.
--TOM



GAAAGH!!!



ODIN OF
ASGARD.

YOU MAY
CALL ME THE
PHOENIX.

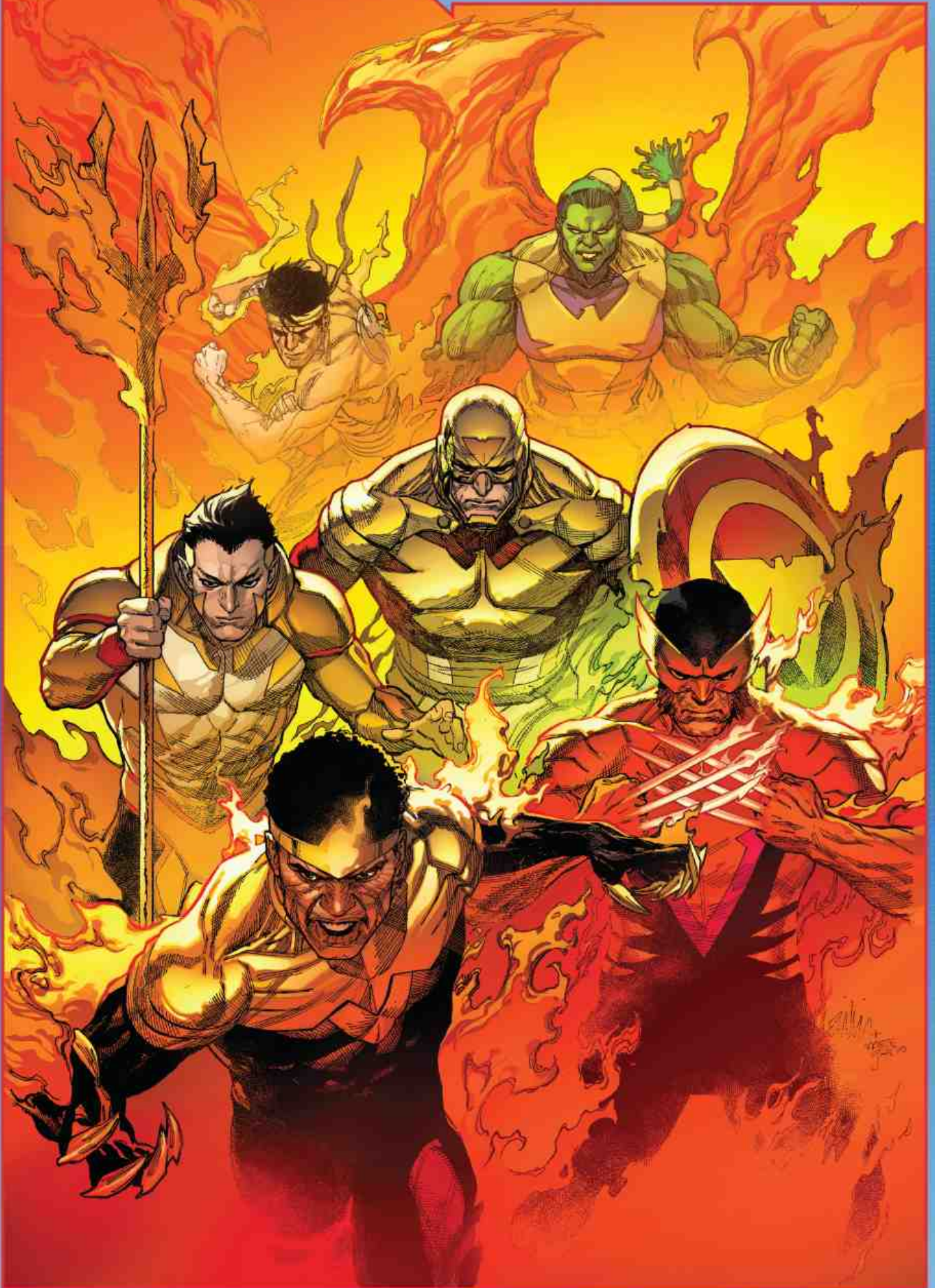
I'M
PUTTING A
TEAM TOGETHER.
TO SAVE THE
WORLD.

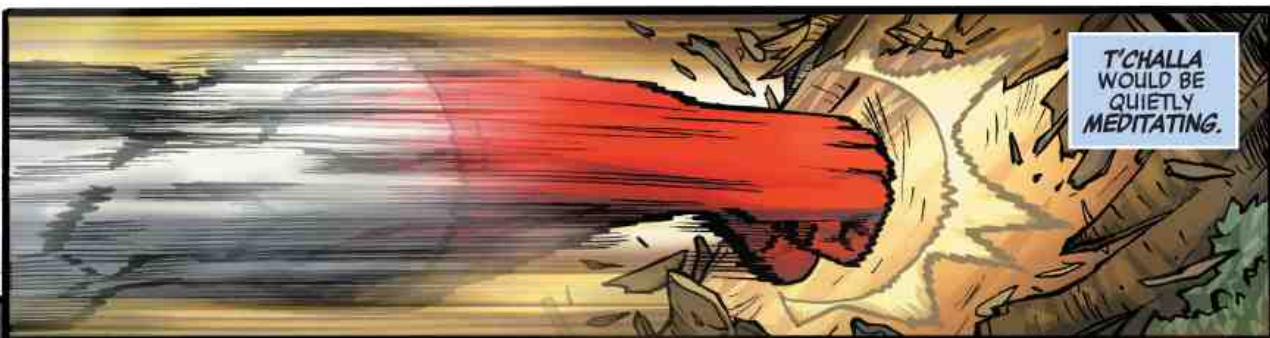
FROM
ITSELF.

AND FROM
PEOPLE LIKE
YOU AND ME.

YOU
IN?

40 ENTER THE PHOENIX PART 1
"SLEEP NOW IN THE FIRE"





T'CHALLA
WOULD BE
QUIETLY
MEDITATING.



THOR WOULD BE GUZZLING MEAD
(BECAUSE HE SOMEHOW ALWAYS
HAS MEAD ON HIS PERSON) AND
BOOMING WITH LAUGHTER.

TONY WOULD BE GOING
ON AND ON ABOUT HIS
METICULOUS BATTLE PLANS.

ME? I GET MY KNUCKLES
WARMED UP AND THINK
ABOUT ALL THE TIMES
I'VE HAD MY TAIL KICKED.



BACK IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE SHIELD,
I WAS IN A WHOLE BUNCH OF FIGHTS
BEFORE I EVER WON A SINGLE ONE.

THOSE ARE THE FIGHTS I REMEMBER.
ESPECIALLY IN MOMENTS LIKE THIS,
RIGHT BEFORE THE BELL RINGS.

I THINK ABOUT ALL THE
BEATINGS I'VE EVER TAKEN,
TO REMIND MYSELF THAT
UNDERNEATH THE FANCY
DUDS AND MUSCLES...

...I'M STILL JUST 98 POUNDS
OF CHEWED BUBBLEGUM FROM
THE LOWER EAST SIDE.

ONLY REASON I'VE STAYED ALIVE
SO LONG IS THAT I'VE OUTWORKED
EVERY OPPONENT I'VE EVER FACED.

THE MOMENT I GET
CARELESS OR COCKY
AND FORGET THAT...

...IS THE DAY
CAPTAIN AMERICA
DIES FOR GOOD.

ROGERS?!

HA!

GIVE
THIS ROUND
TO DOOM!

I FIGURE IT'S IMPORTANT TO
ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW IT
FEELS TO BE THE *WEAKER* MAN.

TO NEVER TAKE MY
POWER FOR GRANTED.

A LESSON
DOCTOR DOOM
NEVER BOTHERED
TO LEARN.

THE SAVAGE LAND.
HIDDEN JURASSIC-ERA GAME PRESERVE.
GRAVEYARD OF DINOSAURS.
THE BATTLE FOR THE PHOENIX:
OPENING ROUND.

PHOENIX
FORCE! THIS...
BIT OF YOUR FIRE
YOU'VE SERVED ME...
DOOM DOES NOT
DO APERITIFS.

GIVE ME YOUR FULL
POWER AND BE DONE
WITH THIS FARCE OF
A TOURNAMENT!

DOOM IS ONE OF
THE VILEST VILLAINS
I'VE EVER MET.

I KNOW HOW
THIS GOES IF
HE WINS.

YOU WILL
FIND NO WORTHIER
MASTER UPON THIS
EARTH. DO YOU HEAR ME,
FIREBIRD? GIVE YOURSELF
WHOLLY UNTO DOOM,
AND TOGETHER WE WILL
BURN THIS PALTRY
COSMOS AS
NEVER--

BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M
ACTUALLY JUST AS WORRIED
ABOUT WHAT'LL HAPPEN...

...IF I
SHOULD
WIN.

GAAGH!

IF I FALL, I
FALL AS WHO I
AM. WHO I'VE
BEEN FOR THE
BETTER PART
OF A CENTURY.

NOBODY'S
BURNING,
VICTOR.

BUT IF I SOMEHOW
MAKE IT THROUGH THIS
WHOLE RIDICULOUS
FRACAS VICTORIOUS...

EXCEPT
FOR YOU.

WHAT
WILL I HAVE
BECOME?

OTHER
THAN LOST.

OTHER THAN
THE PHOENIX.



EARLIER.
AVENGERS MOUNTAIN.

THE PHOENIX FORCE
IS A GIANT
SPACE PARASITE.

MADE
OF FIRE.

**PHOENIX FORCE
NESTING SITE.**

LIKE A BIG ANGRY
STAR WITH WINGS.
AND UNGODLY
DESTRUCTIVE POWER.

ONCE IT GETS ITS
TALONS INTO A
HOST...WHOLE PLANETS
GO UP IN FLAMES.

UNTIL THE HOST
IS DRIVEN CRAZY
AND DIES.

LAST TIME IT CAME TO EARTH,
IT STARTED A WAR, BETWEEN
THE AVENGERS AND THE X-MEN.

WE ALL COULD'VE
HANDLED THAT
ONE BETTER.

NOW'S OUR
CHANCE.

WHY...

...HAVE
YOU
COME?



WE ALL AGREED WE COULDN'T RISK BRINGING **TELEPATHS** INTO THE AREA...FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY.

SO IT WAS **T'CHALLA'S** IDEA TO PLUG HIMSELF INTO THE **CELESTIAL BRAIN** OF **AVENGERS MOUNTAIN** TO TRY TO TALK TO THE **PHOENIX**.

THIS
WORLD IS
PROTECTED.



IT'S NOT A VOICE YOU HEAR WITH YOUR EARS. IT SEEMS TO EXPLODE FROM SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE YOUR OWN **GUTS**.

I TASTE **COPPER**. AND THIS MORNING'S **OATMEAL**.

NO CHANGES IN **BIG BIRD'S** ENERGY READINGS.

WAKANDA HELICARRIER FLEET STANDING BY.

THOR, BE READY TO CALL YOUR **BIFROST** IF WE NEED TO TRY TO TELEPORT IT OUT OF HERE IN A HURRY.

I CAN SEND THE **BEAST** INTO THE COLDEST DEPTHS OF **JOTUNHEIM**--BUT REST ASSURED, CAPTAIN, THE **PHOENIX** WILL RETURN.

UNTIL SHE GETS WHAT SHE WANTS. OR **WHO** SHE WANTS.

GODS HELP WHOEVER THAT IS.

WHY HAVE YOU--



GUGH!

I CAN TELL YOU WHY SHE'S COME.



SHE'S
HERE FOR
ME.

NAMOR!

I WAS
THE ONE WHO
CALLED TO THE
PHOENIX,
T'CHALLA.

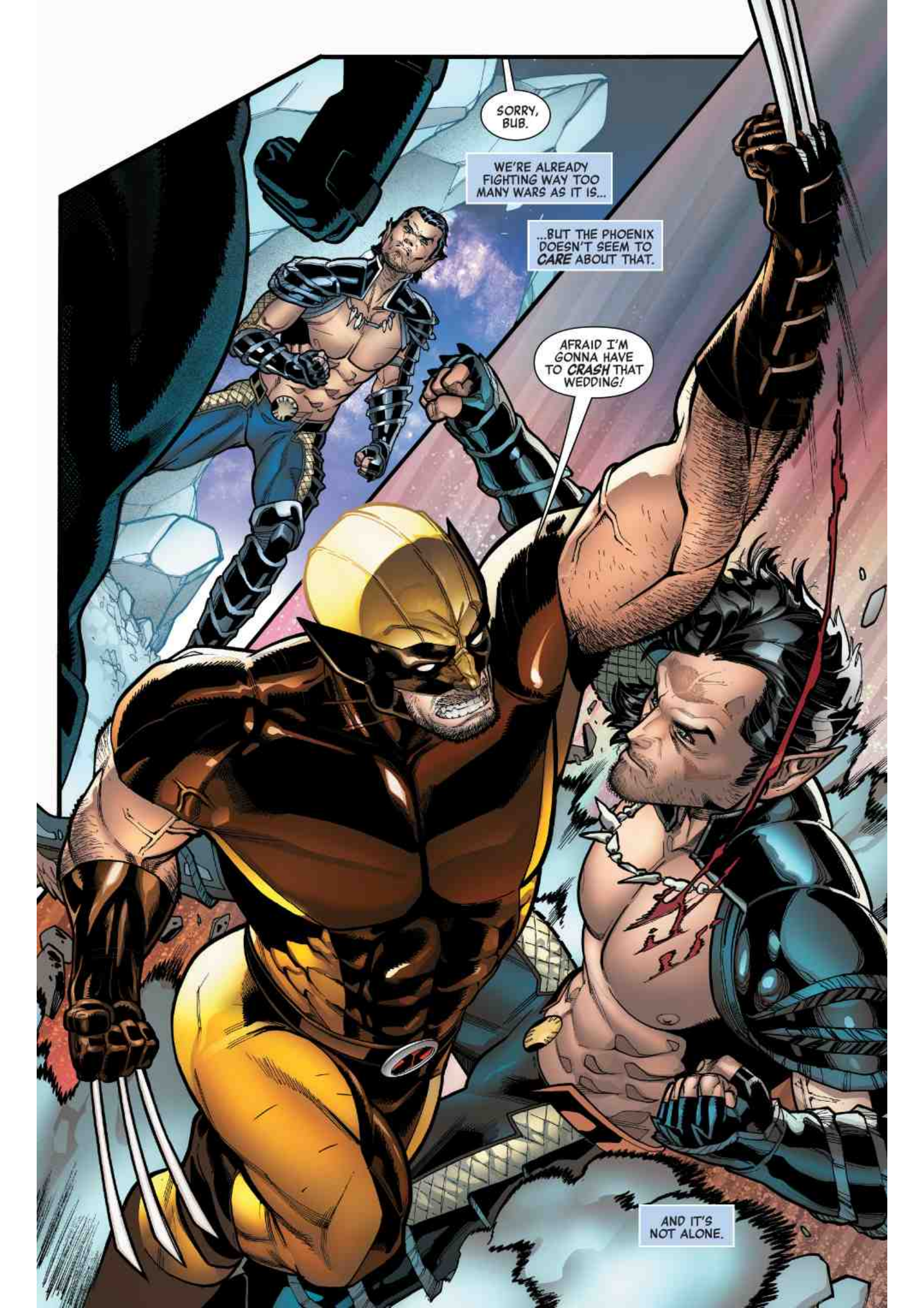
AND SHE
ANSWERED FROM
ACROSS THE BLACK
SEA OF SPACE.

ONCE SHE
AND I ARE REUNITED,
THE DEPTHS OF THE
OCEANS WILL BE THE ONLY
PLACE ON THIS UNGRATEFUL
PLANET THAT ISN'T
IN FLAMES.

DEFENDERS
OF THE DEEP--
KEEP THE AVENGERS
AT BAY...

...WHILE
NAMOR GOES
TO MARRY HIS
FIERY QUEEN.

THE WORLD
CAN'T AFFORD
ANOTHER WAR.



SORRY,
BUB.

WE'RE ALREADY
FIGHTING WAY TOO
MANY WARS AS IT IS...

...BUT THE PHOENIX
DOESN'T SEEM TO
CARE ABOUT THAT.

AFRAID I'M
GONNA HAVE
TO CRASH THAT
WEDDING!

AND IT'S
NOT ALONE.



I DON'T
LIKE THIS.

UNGH!

NOW.

EVEN AS I FEEL
MYSELF *WINNING*.
AND DOOM'S
FACE BREAKING.

THIS FEELING.
THIS *POWER*.

THIS ISN'T
RIGHT.

I'VE HELD THE
COSMIC CUBE.
USED IT. PROBABLY
MORE THAN I
EVER SHOULD'VE.

I'VE WORN THE
INFINITY GAUNTLET AND
SAVED THE WORLD WITH
A WAVE OF MY HAND.



BUT I'M NOT A GOD.
I'M JUST THE GUY
WHO SOMETIMES TELLS
THEM WHAT TO DO.

I'M A SOLDIER AND
A STRUGGLING ARTIST
AND THE SON OF A
DRUNK. AND MY FEET
BELONG ON THE...

WAIT...
WHAT AM
I...

RRRRRRRGGH!!!

...GROUND.

UUUGH!

YOUR FIRE
WILL BE MINE,
ROGERS!

ALL OF
IT WILL BE
MINE!

HGHK!

IT WANTS US
TO KILL EACH
OTHER.

THE
PHOENIX WILL
BE DOOM'S!

AND THE LAST
KILLER LEFT
STANDING WINS
THE PRIZE.

BUT WE'RE NOT
GOING TO PLAY THE
PHOENIX'S GAME.

ARE WE?



LOGAN, LAST
TIME THE PHOENIX
CAME TO EARTH, YOU
AND I STOOD ON
THE SAME SIDE.

WHERE DO
WE STAND
NOW?

IN A
WHOLE
NEW WORLD,
CAP.

BUT DON'T
WORRY, THE
X-MEN AIN'T
LOOKING FOR
A WAR.



NOT WITH
YOU PEOPLE,
AT LEAST.

NOT
JUST
YET.

WE ALL FELT
SOMETHING
BEFORE IT
HAPPENED.



NOT JUST ON THE
VOLCANIC ISLAND
THE PHOENIX HAD
RISEN OUT OF THE
ARCTIC OCEAN.
PEOPLE FELT IT ALL
OVER THE WORLD.



THOSE PEOPLE
WHO'D WIND UP
BEING CALLED.

THEY FELT A FIRE INSIDE
THEIR HEADS. A VOICE MADE
OF WHITE PHOSPHOROUS,
SCREAMING THEIR NAMES.



IT CALLED ME
STEVEN. THE MAN
WHO COULDN'T
DIE BY ICE.

AND THEN...

THE PHOENIX!
IT'S WAKING UP!
EVERYBODY--







I KNOW
WHAT DYING
FEELS LIKE.

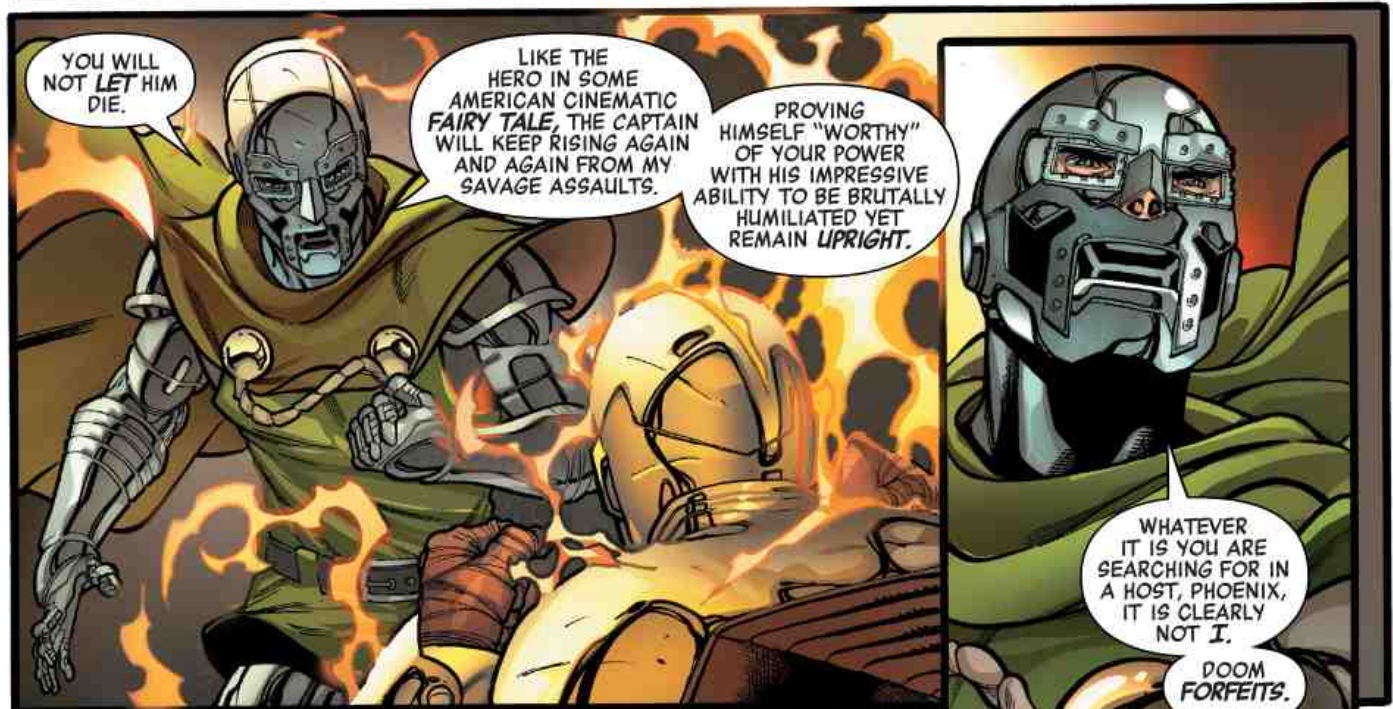
GRRRRGGH!

FEELS LIKE
BURNING.





I SEE.



YOU WILL NOT LET HIM DIE.

LIKE THE HERO IN SOME AMERICAN CINEMATIC FAIRY TALE, THE CAPTAIN WILL KEEP RISING AGAIN AND AGAIN FROM MY SAVAGE ASSAULTS.

PROVING HIMSELF "WORTHY" OF YOUR POWER WITH HIS IMPRESSIVE ABILITY TO BE BRUTALLY HUMILIATED YET REMAIN UPRIGHT.

WHATEVER IT IS YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR IN A HOST, PHOENIX, IT IS CLEARLY NOT I.

DOOM FORFEITS.



WHERE... WHERE'D HE...





CAP!

HEY, HE'S
BACK!

GOD.
DOOM NEARLY
KILLED HIM.

GUESS
THAT TELLS
US WHO **WON**
THE FIRST
ROUND.



I
DID.

A NAZI'S
JAW BREAKING
BENEATH MY
KNUCKLES.

A NEW YORK
SUNRISE WITHOUT
SMOKE OR SCREAMS.

EVERYONE MAKING
IT BACK TO BASE
FOR COLD BEERS.

I KNOW WHAT
VICTORY FEELS
LIKE.

DAMN.
THAT SURE
RAISES A FEW
QUESTIONS.

NO. IT
ONLY RAISES
ONE.

THIS
ISN'T IT.





WHO'S NEXT?!

THERE ARE NO WINNERS HERE.

JUST THE PHOENIX...

...AND ITS PREY.

41 ENTER THE PHOENIX PART 2
"BLACK FLAME IN THE HOUR OF CHAOS"





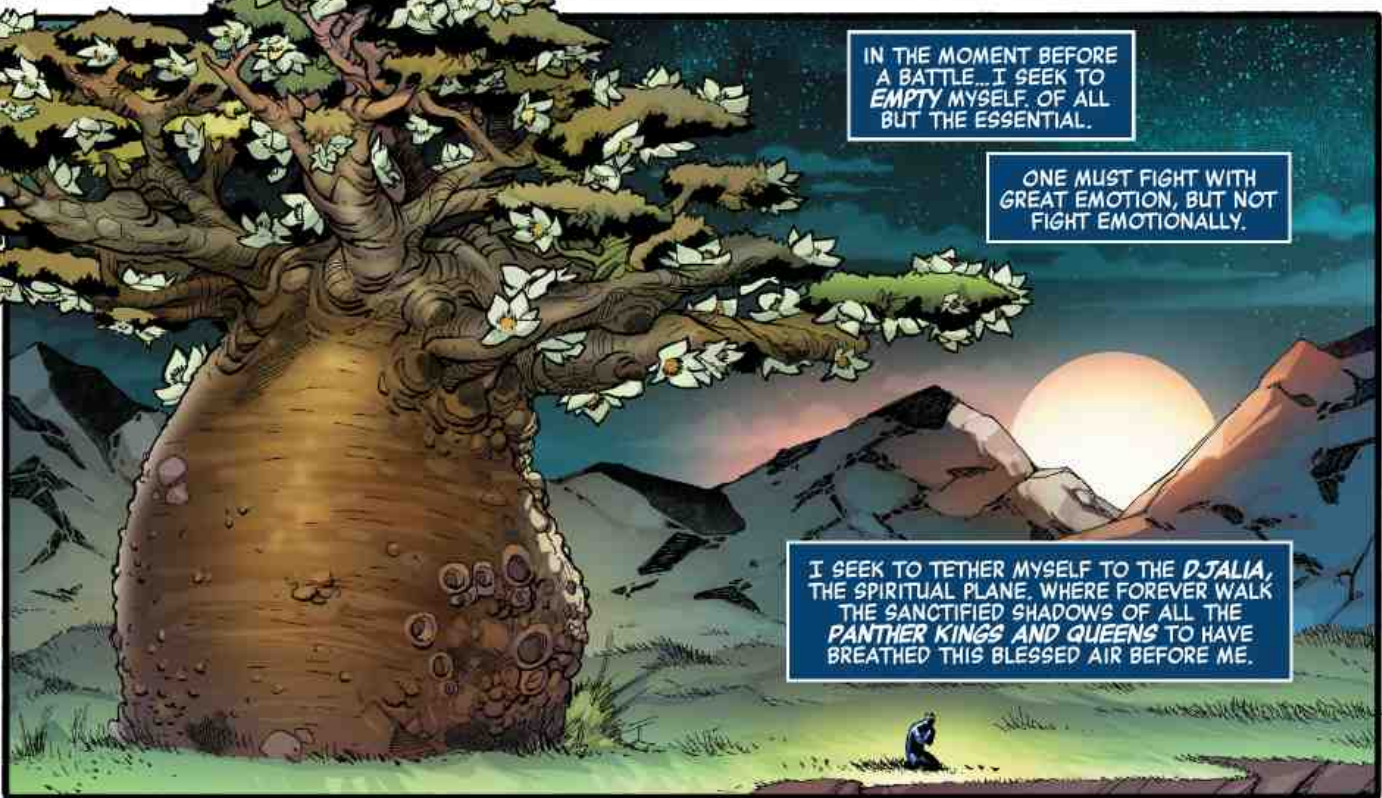
STEVEN IMPATIENTLY
PUNCHES THE SCENERY.

THOR LAUGHS TO
HIDE HIS BROODING.

CAROL BROODS
TO HIDE HER
LAUGHTER.

TONY ARMORS HIS
FRAGILE EGO ONE
EGOTISTICAL
WORD AT A TIME.

WE ALL HAVE
OUR ROUTINES.



IN THE MOMENT BEFORE
A BATTLE... I SEEK TO
EMPTY MYSELF. OF ALL
BUT THE ESSENTIAL.

ONE MUST FIGHT WITH
GREAT EMOTION, BUT NOT
FIGHT EMOTIONALLY.

I SEEK TO TETHER MYSELF TO THE *DJALIA*,
THE SPIRITUAL PLANE. WHERE FOREVER WALK
THE SANCTIFIED SHADOWS OF ALL THE
PANTHER KINGS AND QUEENS TO HAVE
BREATHED THIS BLESSED AIR BEFORE ME.



THE AIR OF
WAKANDA.

BUT MY CONNECTION TO THE
DJALIA HAS BEEN SEVERED.
AS HAVE ALL COMMUNICATIONS
WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

I WAS PUT HERE, WITHIN
SIGHT OF HOME, YET STILL
SO FAR AWAY, TO REMIND
ME THAT I AM WHOLLY THE
PRISONER OF THE PHOENIX.



NOT EVEN MY *MIND* IS MY OWN.
I CAN FEEL THE PHOENIX'S FIERY
TALONS INVADING MY THOUGHTS.

"I AM COSMIC WILDFIRE INCARNATE,"
IT WHISPERS LIKE SEARING EMBERS
INSIDE MY BRAIN. "YOUR MIND AND
BODY ARE NAUGHT BUT *KINDLING*."

"AND IT IS NOT THE PLACE
OF KINDLING TO RESIST
THE CALL OF THE FLAME."

GET HERROOR!

THE PHOENIX ALSO
REMINDS ME THAT
EVERYTHING BURNS
AT THE TOUCH OF
THE MAN-THING.

EVERYTHING
THAT KNOWS
FEAR.



MANY HAVE MISTAKEN
WAKANDA FOR KINDLING
OVER THE YEARS.



THEIR **BONES** NOURISH THE
ROOTS OF THIS ANCIENT TREE.

MAN-THING,
GUARDIAN OF THE
NEXUS OF ALL
REALITIES.



THE NIGHT SKY DOES NOT
FEAR THE SUN, FOR ONLY THE
DARKNESS IS ETERNAL.

I DID NOT ASK TO BE
CALLED TO THIS BATTLE,
BUT THE **BLACK PANTHER**
IS ONE OF THIS WORLD'S
PRIMORDIAL POWERS, THE
SAME AS THE FIREBIRD.

ONLY WE HAVE
NEVER LEFT. WE
PANTHERS HAVE
WATERED THIS
GROUND WITH
BLOOD, MUCH OF
IT OUR OWN, FOR
GENERATIONS.

YOU MAY BE
THE BLINKING
SUN, BUT WE
ARE THE ENDLESS
SEA OF NIGHT.
I AM NOT HERE
TO **RESIST** YOU,
PHOENIX.

I KNOW YOU
TO BE A **NOBLE** BEING
AND THAT THE PHOENIX
IS INFECTING YOUR
MIND.

I AM
ALSO AN
ALLY OF YOUR
PROGENY.

I'M HERE
TO WIN.

MAY YOU
BOTH FORGIVE
ME FOR WHAT I
MUST DO.

MAY THE
BAOBAB
FORGIVE ME
AS WELL.

WELCOME TO
THE DAWN.





THE KING'S BACK.



AND THE MAN-TH--?

(AIN'T SAYING THAT NAME.)

THE OTHER GUY?

HE WILL... REGROW.

THE SAME DEAL AS DOOM AND ME? YOU WERE BOTH **POWERED UP** WITH A VESTIGE OF THE PHOENIX?

YES. IT WAS... EXHILARATING. **FRIGHTFULLY SO.**



SOME OF US TRIED EXPLORING THIS BIG **NOTHING PLACE** WHILE YOU WERE GONE.

BUT NO MATTER WHICH DIRECTION WE GO, EVEN STRAIGHT UP, WE ALWAYS END UP BACK HERE.

IT'S A DIMENSIONALLY TRANSCENDENTAL SPACE OF SOME SORT. TO KEEP US CONTAINED UNTIL IT'S OUR TURN TO DO BATTLE.

THE **BLACK KNIGHT'S** NO SAINT, BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO FIGHT SOME 9-YEAR-OLD **MOON GIRL**. NOT EVEN ONE WITH HER OWN DINOSAUR.

WE CAN'T JUST SIT HERE AND LET SOME FIERY **SPACE DRAGON** TREAT US LIKE PLAYTHINGS.

WE SHOULD ASSUME OUR CAPTOR IS LISTENING TO EVERYTHING WE SAY. OR **THINK**. AS EASILY AS I'M READING YOUR LIPS.

ECHO'S RIGHT. WE'RE **INSIDE** THE PHOENIX. I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. DURING MY OWN RUN-IN WITH THE PHOENIX FORCE. WHEN I WAS **THOR**.



WAIT, THAT WAS **YOU**? AM I CRAZY, OR DID YOU PUNCH ME IN THE FACE?

IT'S CALLED THE **WHITE HOT ROOM**.





THE HIMALAYAS.
THE MYSTICAL CITY
OF K'UN-LUN.

PHOENIX MAN
AND IRON FIST:
HEROES FOR
HIRE.

DOES
HAVE A RING
TO IT.
BUT I
DON'T WANT
THIS CRAZY
DAMN SPACE
POWER.

YEAH?

WELL,
I DO!

IT'S NOT JUST OUR
FIGHTING PROWESS
THE PHOENIX SEEMS
TO BE GAUGING.
IT'S OUR PASSION.

AMERICAN EAGLE IS
A PROUD MEMBER OF
THE NAVAJO NATION.
HE WOULD DO ALMOST
ANYTHING TO BRING
POWER TO HIS PEOPLE.

PUNCHING LUKE CAGE'S BULLETPROOF
FACE HAS JUST BROKEN THREE OF
AMERICAN EAGLE'S KNUCKLES.

HE STILL
PUNCHES
HIM AGAIN.

AND
AGAIN.

THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.

SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL,
QUEEN OF THE SAVAGE
LAND, HAS HUNTED MANY
FEARSOME CREATURES, GREAT
AND SMALL, IN HER LIFE.

BUT SHE WOULD NEVER DARE
FIGHT A CHILD, ESPECIALLY
NOT ONE AS ENDEARING AS
LUNELLA LAFAYETTE, THE
MOON GIRL, PERHAPS THE
SMARTEST PERSON ON THE
FACE OF THE EARTH.

BUT MOON GIRL'S
TIME-DISPLACED
DEVIL DINOSAUR
ON THE
OTHER HAND...



SUBTERRANEA.
MILES UNDERNEATH
THE SURFACE
OF THE EARTH.

THE EYE OF
THE WATCHER,
COMBINED WITH
THE POWER OF
THE PHOENIX.

I...I SEE
EVERYONE WHO'S
DYING RIGHT NOW...
ACROSS THE WHOLE
STINKING
GALAXY.

HEH, YOU
MAYBE CAN'T
TELL...BUT I'M
SMILING.

AS
SOMEONE
WHO'S DIED
HERSELF...

...AND WHOSE
HONOR AND DUTY
IT IS, EVERY DAY, TO
BE THERE WITH OTHERS
FOR THEIR FINAL
SUFFERING...

...I CAN
ASSURE YOU THOSE
MOST VULNERABLE AND
INTIMATE OF MOMENTS
ARE NOT YOURS FOR
THE PEEP-SHOWING,
ORB.

BUT THIS
ONE SURE AS
HEL IS!

JANE FOSTER HAS
SHOWN HERSELF MORE THAN
CAPABLE OF CARRYING ON
CENTURIES-OLD LEGACIES,
AS A GODDESS OF THUNDER
AND NOW A VALKYRIE.

BUT THE PHOENIX IS NOT
A WEAPON TO SIMPLY
BE WIELDED AND SET ASIDE.
WITH THE GREAT POWER OF THE
PHOENIX MUST ALSO COME...

CRACK

...GREAT CONSEQUENCES.

SUCH
AWESOME
POWER! STANDS
TO REASON I
WAS CALLED!

**WUNDAGORE
MOUNTAIN.**

ONLY THE
STRONGEST
MEMBER OF THE
SQUADRON SUPREME
DESERVES TO WIELD
MIGHT SUCH AS
THIS!

YIELD,
LITTLE MAN!
YOU HAD NO HOPE
OF DEFEATING
HYPERION BEFORE,
LET ALONE
NOW!

I FEEL MY
SUPER-SENSES
EXPANDING...TO
INFINITY!

I FEEL
THE COSMOS
ITSELF COURSING
THROUGH MY
VEINS!

I CAN HEAR...
MORE LANGUAGES
THAN I CAN COUNT!
AS MANY RACES AS
THERE ARE STARS, ALL
LAUGHING, CRYING,
WHISPERING THEIR
LOVE TO ONE
ANOTHER!

IT IS
A UNIVERSE...
TEEMING WITH LIFE!
WITH REBIRTH!
WITH SUCH...

NO.



THIS WILL...
CHANGE ME!
EXPAND MY MIND
IN WAYS I
COULD'VE NEVER
IMAGINED!

I CANNOT
BE THIS...THIS
OPEN-MINDED!



I YIELD!
PLEASE, JUST
MAKE IT STOP!

SHANG-CHI IS A
MASTER OF MANY
FIGHTING ARTS.

INCLUDING THE
ART OF FIGHTING
WITHOUT FIGHTING.

IN WHAT UNIQUE WAYS
WOULD HE CHANNEL
AND MANIFEST A POWER
LIKE THE PHOENIX? WHAT
WOULD HE BECOME?

WHAT DARK PRICE WOULD HE BE FORCED TO PAY?

GREENWICH VILLAGE. DOCTOR STRANGE'S KITCHEN.

THIS IS...
SOME FORM
OF HUMOR
PERHAPS?

NAH,
TOOTS.

THIS IS A
RECKONING
A LONG TIME
COMING IS WHAT
IT IS!

NONE OF
YOU HAIRLESS
APES ARE GONNA
BE LAUGHING AT
OLD HOWARD THE
DUCK NOW!

THIS'LL BE
EVEN BIGGER
THAN THAT TIME
I RAN FOR PRESI--

THE RED WIDOW
IS A PRODUCT OF
RUSSIA'S NOTORIOUS
RED ROOM.

THE BRUTAL
BLAST FURNACE
WHERE MOSCOW'S
DEADLIEST
ASSASSINS
ARE FORGED.

WAAAUGH!

THE DAY SHE WAS BROUGHT
IN FOR TRAINING, SEEING
THAT SHE HAD A BED AND
ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT FOR
THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE...

...SHE SMILED.

SHE WAS
BEATEN AND
STARVED FOR
MANY WEEKS
FOR THAT
SMILE.

THE RED
WIDOW WAS 7
YEARS OLD.



YOU COULD **END** THIS.

I WILL.

JUST NOT THE WAY YOU WANT.

HA. AND THEY SAY THE ATLANTEAN IS THE **ARROGANT** ONE.



THE **PANTHER** I KNEW IN MY TIME WAS JUST A MAN WHO FOUGHT WITH **GLOWING ROCKS**. YET WHEN HE STOOD AMONG **GODS**, YOU COULD TELL...

...HE BELIEVED HE COULD **KILL US ALL** IF HE EVER NEEDED TO.



WAKANDA IS **OLDER** THAN ATLANTIS. DESPITE BEING BUILT UPON AN ALL-POWERFUL RESOURCE THE REST OF THE WORLD **COVETS**.

IN ALL YOUR EONS, **PHOENIX**, YOU SHOULD'VE LEARNED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **ARROGANCE** AND **FORTITUDE**.

I WILL **END** THIS. NO MATTER WHAT IT **COSTS** ME.

OR YOU.



OH, I BELIEVE YOU, BUT I HAVE NO SAY IN THESE PROCEEDINGS. I AM BUT A GHOST ENJOYING THE ENDLESS NOTHINGNESS OF HER ETERNAL REWARD.

BUT I HAVE BEEN SENT FROM THE BEAK OF THE BIRD WITH AN OFFER.

IT'S YOU SHE WANTS, T'CHALLA.



GIVE YOURSELF TO HER, AND SHE PROMISES TO BURN THE NAME OF WAKANDA ACROSS THE STARS.

TRY TO FIGHT HER?

AND SHE'LL BURN IT TO ASH.



THAT IS NOT AN OFFER. HERE IS AN OFFER.

YOU HAVE FOUGHT IN DEFENSE OF THIS PLANET IN THE PAST. SHOW ME YOU CAN DO SO AGAIN, AND I WILL SPARE YOUR LIFE.

BUT CONTINUE TO TREAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD AS YOURS FOR THE BURNING... AND I WILL NOT BE SO MERCIFUL.

I WILL SHOW YOU, PHOENIX, HOW A PANTHER... DEALS WITH A BUZZARD.



MMM. I DO ADMIRE YOUR... FORTITUDE, PANTHER. BUT SHE DOES NOT.

YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN TAME THE PHOENIX. MANY HAVE TRIED, AND SEEN THEIR PLANETS PILED INTO A BONFIRE.



TELL ME... HOW DOES A PANTHER DEAL WITH A BUZZARD...

...WHEN THE BIRD IS FEEDING ON ITS CORPSE?





IF YOUR COMMS WEREN'T DOWN, I BELIEVE YOU'D FIND YOUR LMD CALLED IN *SICK* TODAY.

IN WAKANDA, EVEN OUR *GRADE SCHOOL* CHILDREN CAN HACK INTO YOUR GOVERNMENT'S *ROXXON-MADE* DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY.

IT'S WHAT THEY DO INSTEAD OF *RECESS*.



OH YES, I KNOW. I'VE ALREADY HAD YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS CLASSIFIED AS CENTERS FOR *CYBER-TERRORISM*.

AFTER THIS LATEST ATTACK, I EXPECT THE WHITE HOUSE WILL OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE YOUR ENTIRE COUNTRY FOR WHAT IT IS.

AND SANCTION MY SQUADRON TO TOPPLE YOUR LITTLE BACKWOODS, SOCIALIST, *EVIL EMPIRE* ONCE AND FOR ALL.



DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY *LOBBYISTS* A LITERAL MOUNTAIN OF *VIBRANIUM* CAN BUY? WITH HOUSE *BUDGET HEARINGS* IMMINENT, YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT, CONGRESSMAN.

YOUR SQUADRON WILL NOT SURVIVE THE *FISCAL QUARTER*.



WELL, THEN, IT WOULD APPEAR WE ARE AT A *STALEMATE*.

IF YOU SAY SO.

I SUPPOSE THAT MEANS...

...WE'LL JUST HAVE TO *BEAT* THE LIVING HELL OUT OF EACH OTHER.



ONE MUST FIGHT WITH
GREAT EMOTION, BUT
NOT FIGHT EMOTIONALLY.

BUT THE PHOENIX FANS
THE EMBERS OF OUR
DARKEST EMOTIONS INTO
A RAGING INFERNO.

AN INFERNO
THAT COULD PUT
AN ENTIRE GALAXY
TO THE TORCH.

I TELL MYSELF
I CAN TAME
THE FIREBIRD.

THAT I AM THE CAVEMAN
PANTHER WITH GLOWING
ROCKS WHO CAN FEEL A
GOD IF NEED BE.

AND IN RETURN, I HEAR
THE BIRD LAUGH INSIDE
MY HEAD, WITH THE
VOICES OF A THOUSAND
FOOLS JUST LIKE ME.

IT'S WORK IS FAR EASIER.
IT DOESN'T NEED TO
BREAK ME. OR ANY OF US
WHO'VE BEEN FORCED TO
ENTER THE PHOENIX.

IT ONLY NEEDS TO
PUSH US TO THE
POINT THAT WE LET
GO...OF EVERYTHING...

EXCEPT
OUR RAGE.

THIS IS THE
WAKANDAN HELICARRIER
BOSEMAN, ON PATROL
ABOVE THE ATLANTIC
TRENCH!

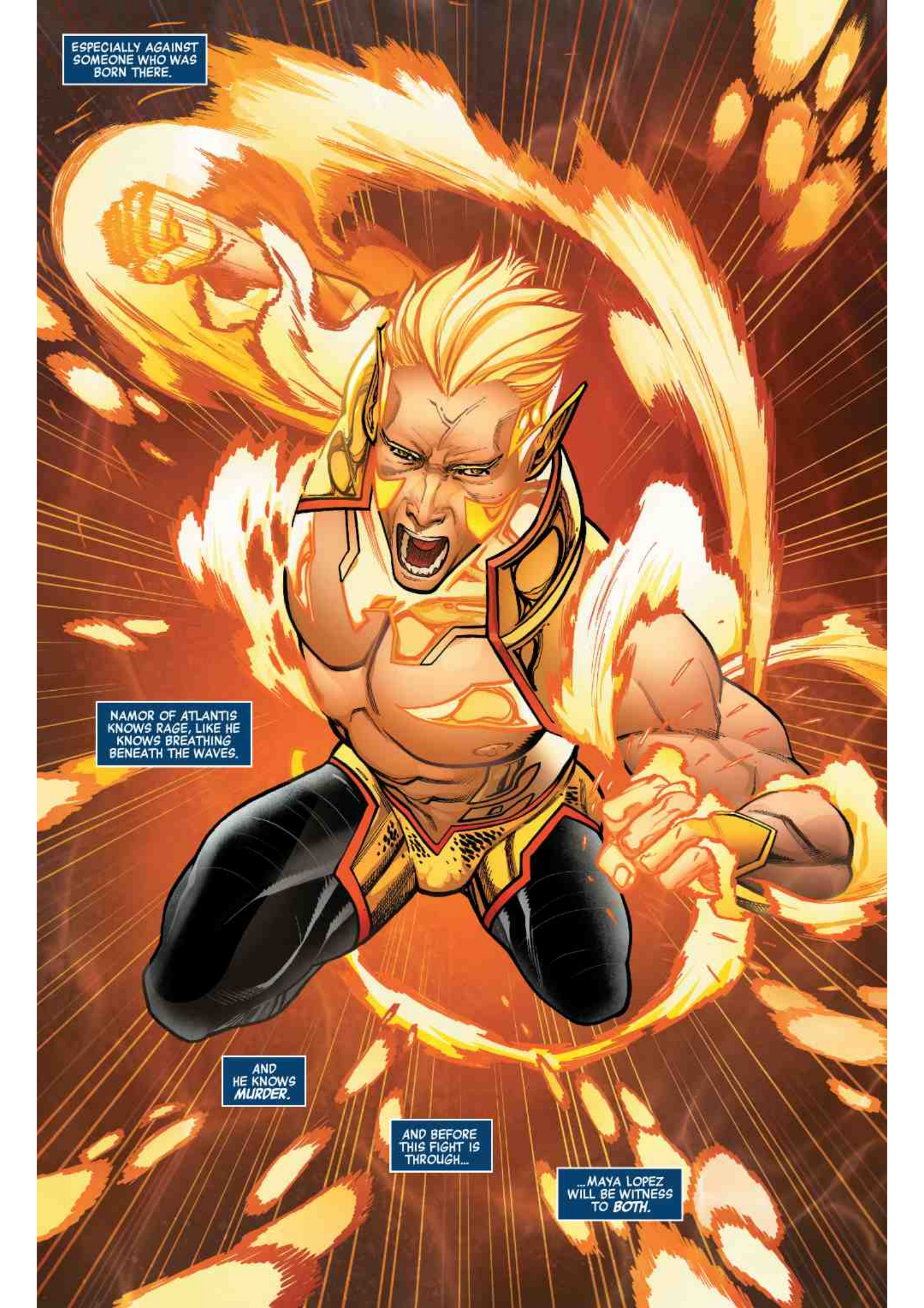
THE OCEAN IS
ON FIRE! WHAT IN
THE NAME OF BAST IS
HAPPENING DOWN
THERE?!

AND SOME OF
US...LET GO A
LONG TIME AGO.

MAYA LOPEZ
KNOWS ABOUT
RAGE.

AND WITH HER ABILITY
TO ECHO ANY FIGHTING
STYLE SHE'S EVER SEEN,
SHE'S MORE THAN A MATCH
FOR ALMOST ANYONE.

BUT SHE'S NOT
USED TO FIGHTING
ON THE BOTTOM
OF THE SEA.

A full-page comic book illustration of Namor of Atlantis. He is depicted in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose, surrounded by intense orange and yellow flames and smoke. He has blonde, spiky hair and a fierce, shouting expression. He wears a gold and black suit with red accents. The background is dark with radiating lines, suggesting a powerful explosion or fire.

ESPECIALLY AGAINST
SOMEONE WHO WAS
BORN THERE.

NAMOR OF ATLANTIS
KNOWS RAGE, LIKE HE
KNOWS BREATHING
BENEATH THE WAVES.

AND
HE KNOWS
MURDER.

AND BEFORE
THIS FIGHT IS
THROUGH...

...MAYA LOPEZ
WILL BE WITNESS
TO *BOTH.*

42 ENTER THE PHOENIX PART 3
"BE LIKE FIRE"



THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. TWO THOUSAND FATHOMS DEEP.

WHEN I WAS
A CHILD...

...BARELY OLD
ENOUGH TO GO
FOR SWIMS ON
MY OWN...

...I MURDERED
A SHARK.

A BULL SHARK. MUCH BIGGER
THAN ME. I DRAGGED IT TO
THE SURFACE AND HURLED IT
ONTO THE ROCKS.

THEN WATCHED IT
FLOP AND SMOTHER.

MY MOTHER FOUND ME,
DEMANDING TO KNOW WHY,
ANGRILY ASKING IF I'D
RATHER LIVE ON THE
SURFACE WITH MY FATHER...

...WHERE MEN KILLED NOT
TO FEED THEMSELVES OR
THEIR TRIBE BUT FOR NO
DISCERNIBLE REASON AT ALL.

"THE SHARK
TRIED TO
BITE ME"

...I LIED.



"IF WE KILLED EVERYTHING UNDER THE WAVES THAT WANTED TO BITE US, WE WOULD SOON BE SWIMMING ALONE," MY MOTHER CHIDED.

BUT I CONFIDENTLY DISAGREED.



"AFTER I'VE KILLED A FEW, EVERYTHING IN THE DEEP WILL LEARN TO SWIM CLEAR OF PRINCE NAMOR."



MY MOTHER BEAMED WITH PRIDE AND SALUTED ME AS A PROUD ATLANTEAN.



SHE HAD ME CARRY THE SHARK'S BODY INTO THE DEPTHS ALONE.



IT WAS HEAVY IN MY ARMS.



BUT NOT AS HEAVY AS MY HEART.



I WEPT AS I
CARRIED THE DEAD
SHARK BELOW.

I WEPT SO MANY
TEARS, THE TIDES
ROSE HIGHER ACROSS
THE GLOBE.



AND AS I WATCHED THE
SHARK SINK TO THE OCEAN
FLOOR, WHERE HUNGRY
CRABS AND BARRACUDAS
WAITED, I LET MY
LAST TEAR FALL WITH IT.



THE LAST TEAR THE
FUTURE KING OF
ATLANTIS WOULD
EVER SHED.



THOUGH THE SHARK WAS
FAR FROM THE LAST
THING I WOULD KILL
BENEATH THESE WAVES...



...TO ENSURE NOTHING EVER
EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT
SINKING ITS TEETH INTO ME.



IF I DIE,
THE SEAS DIE
WITH ME.

I AM THE ONLY
FORCE KEEPING
THE EARTH FROM
BECOMING A DESERT.



BUT EVEN A
KING NEEDS HELP
NOW AND THEN.



I NEED THE POWER
OF THE *STARS*.
NOT TO SET THE
AIR-BREATHERS ON
FIRE. NOT ALL OF
THEM, AT LEAST.



ALL I MUST
DO IS HOLD
THEM AT BAY...
KEEP THEM
FLOPPING AND
GASPING ON
THE SUNBAKED
ROCKS...



...AS THEY
SMOTHER
THEMSELVES.

I AM NAMOR
OF ATLANTIS.

LORD OF THE
SEVEN SEAS.

AND SOON
TO BE KING OF
THE HEAVENS.

I WILL BE
THE ONE TRUE
PHOENIX.





DESPITE HOW IT
APPEARS...I DO NOT
PUNCH WITH MY FIST.

GUUGH!



THE FIST IS
BUT THE TIP OF
THE ICEBERG
PROTRUDING
FROM THE SEA.



IT IS EVERYTHING
BELOW THE
SURFACE THAT
DOES THE TRUE
PUNCHING.

I PUNCH WITH MY
SHOULDER, MY
HIPS, MY HEAD, MY
FEET, MY HEART.

WITH MY MEMORIES
AND FEARS. MY
INTERNAL ENERGY.
MY CHI.



WHEN I PUNCH,
I PUNCH WITH MY
BODY AND SOUL.

GOOD.

NOW
HIT ME
AGAIN.



HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA.
THE SHAOLIN MONASTERY, WHERE KUNG FU WAS BORN.

THAT IS A PUNCH THAT TAKES MANY YEARS TO LEARN. THE TRAINING IS MOST RIGOROUS.

I AM STILL UNSURE ABOUT THIS, CAPTAIN. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO FIGHT YOU.

YEAH, BELIEVE ME, SHANG-CHI, THE FEELING'S MUTUAL.

BUT THE PHOENIX ISN'T GIVING US MUCH OF AN OPTION. IT'S DETERMINED TO CHOOSE **SOMEBODY** TO BE ITS NEW AVATAR.



I DO PUSH-UPS ON MY KNUCKLES. MY FINGERTIPS. GRIND MY FISTS IN BROKEN GLASS.

AND WHILE THOSE OF US WHO'VE BEEN CALLED HAVE SPENT A LOT OF TIME FOCUSED ON WHO WE DEFINITELY **DON'T** WANT THAT TO BE, WE HAVEN'T TALKED ABOUT WHO IT **SHOULD** BE.

I PUNCH BOARDS AND CONCRETE BLOCKS AND WEAR OUT WING CHUN WOODEN MEN.

AND I PUNCH **MYSELF** AS WELL. DEEP INSIDE, UNTIL MY SUBCONSCIOUS IS A HARDENED MASS OF SCAR TISSUE.



I KNOW THIS ISN'T A FAIR ASK. WE'VE ALL SEEN WHAT THE PHOENIX TENDS TO DO TO PEOPLE IT POSSESSES.

BUT UNTIL WE CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO STOP THIS WHOLE CRAZY TOURNAMENT, WE HAVE TO BE PREPARED FOR THE OUTCOME.



THERE IS NO PART OF ME THAT CAN BE ALLOWED TO BE VULNERABLE. UNMUSCLED. UNTEMPERED.

SHANG-CHI, YOU'RE ONE OF THE MOST GIFTED FIGHTERS I'VE EVER SEEN, AND FOR ME, THAT COVERS A LOTTA GROUND.

I BELIEVE IN YOU. AND I'M HERE TO HELP YOU TRAIN. TO **CONTROL** THIS POWER. AND TO **WIN** THIS FIGHT.

THAT IS HOW YOU MUST PUNCH.



THAT IS HOW TO BE LIKE **FIRE**.

NOW PUNCH ME IN THE FACE WITH THE PHOENIX.



FIRE BURNS
AND CONSUMES.
LAYS WASTE.



BUT IT WARMS
AND NOURISHES
AS WELL. AND IN
THE WAKE OF ITS
BURNING, LIFE IS
RENEWED.



ITS FLAMES CAN BE
HARNESSED TO BUILD,
TO POWER.

IN THE SAME SPIRIT,
I MUST HARNESSE THE
FIRE OF THE PHOENIX.



TO WIELD IT
AS NO ONE EVER
HAS BEFORE.

TO GIVE BIRTH
TO A NEW STYLE
OF WUSHU.

THE WAY OF
THE FIREBIRD.

COSMIC
KUNG FU.

A full-page comic book illustration of Shang-Chi. He is a young man with black hair, wearing a white tank top and brown pants, with white bandages on his forearms and legs. He is in a dynamic, lunging pose, holding two wooden staffs. The background is a city of traditional Chinese architecture, including a pagoda, which is engulfed in intense orange and yellow flames. The sky is filled with dark, swirling smoke. The overall tone is dramatic and action-packed.

MY NAME IS
SHANG-CHI.

MASTER OF
KUNG FU.

AND THESE ARE
THE DEADLY HANDS
OF THE PHOENIX.

I WILL PUNCH
WITH ALL THE FIRE
IN MY SOUL.

BUT I WILL
WALK INSTEAD
OF FLY.

I WILL GUARD
MY MIND LIKE THE
FORBIDDEN CITY.

AND I WILL **NEVER**
TAKE ANOTHER LIFE, NO
MATTER WHAT THE--





EXACT SAME
THING HE'LL TRY
TO DO TO WHICHEVER
ONE OF US HE
FACES NEXT.

I'VE WRESTLED
PREHISTORIC FISH
BEFORE. USUALLY ENDS
WITH **ZABU** GNAWING
ON THEIR BONES.

GRRRR.

WE AIN'T
ALL FISH,
LADY.

WE CAN'T
KEEP PLAYING THIS
GAME! PEOPLE ARE
GOING TO **DIE!**

I ASSURE YOU,
IT'S NO GAME,
STEVEN.

IT IS TO THE BIG **DANDIFIED
BUZZARD** WHO'S LORDING
OVER US. WE'VE GOTTA FIGURE
A WAY OUT OF THIS PLACE,
T'CHALLA, AND TAKE THE
FIGHT TO THE
PHOENIX.

LIKE IT OR NOT, OUR FIGHT IS
HERE. I BATTLED **NIGHTHAWK**
FOR HOURS, TO A VIRTUAL
STANDSTILL. UNTIL THE PHOENIX
SIMPLY **CHOSE** ME
OVER HIM.

WE ARE ALL
WRESTLING WITH
THE SAME **FEARS** RIGHT
NOW. OF FAILING. AND,
EVEN MORE SO, OF WHAT
HAPPENS IF WE **WIN**.



I DON'T
HAVE THAT
FEAR.

AND WHAT
IF WE **DO** WIN? THEN
IT'S AVENGERS VS. THE
PHOENIX ALL OVER AGAIN?
EXCEPT THIS TIME, IT'S ONE
OF **US** WHO'S WEARING
THE FLAMES.

I AIN'T NO
AVENGER NO
MORE.

AND **NONE** 'A Y'ALL ARE
GONNA BE WEARING
FLAMES.

NOT
FOR **LONG**,
AT LEAST.

YOU PEOPLE
HAVE **TAKEN** ENOUGH
FROM MUTANTS. YOU
AIN'T GETTING THE
PHOENIX TOO.

THIS RIGHT
HERE IS EXACTLY
WHAT THE PHOENIX
WANTS.

US POSTURING,
BICKERING WITH ONE
ANOTHER, DIVIDED.



YEAH, SAYS YOU.
AIN'T YOU THE
LADY WHO STOLE
THOR'S HAMMER
AND NAME?

ONE OF
US IS GOING
TO DIE HERE,
T'CHALLA. UNLESS
WE CAN END THIS
AND SEND THAT
SPACE BIRD
BACK WHERE IT
BELONGS.

AND WHAT
IF THE **EARTH**
IS WHERE IT
BELONGS, STEVEN?
WHAT IF IT
HAS COME TO US
NOW FOR A
VERY SPECIFIC
REASON?

EITHER WAY,
WE MUST BE
READY. BOTH HERE,
WITHIN THE
PHOENIX FORCE...

"...AND WITHOUT."

AVENGERS MOUNTAIN. THE BRAIN ROOM.

OKAY, I'VE
GOT YOUR CELESTIAL
TELEPORTER PRIMED AND
LOCKED ONTO THE
PHOENIX'S RADIATION
SIGNATURE.

IF WE SEND IT
TO YOUR AVENGERS
MOUNTAIN JAIL, ARE
YOU SURE IT'LL
HOLD?

IT'S A
CELESTIAL'S
RIB CAGE,
MOON GIRL.
IT'LL
HOLD.

THIS IS
BLADE. THOR SAYS
TO ONLY DO THAT AS
A LAST RESORT. IF
THE BIRD TRIES TO
FLY THE COOP.

AT LEAST
UNTIL WE GET
THE OTHER
AVENGERS
BACK.

OUR KING
WILL SEND THEM
BACK TO YOU! OR
AT LEAST THEIR
ASHES!

KEEP YOUR
PEOPLE BACK,
SHAMU. GOD'S
ORDERS.

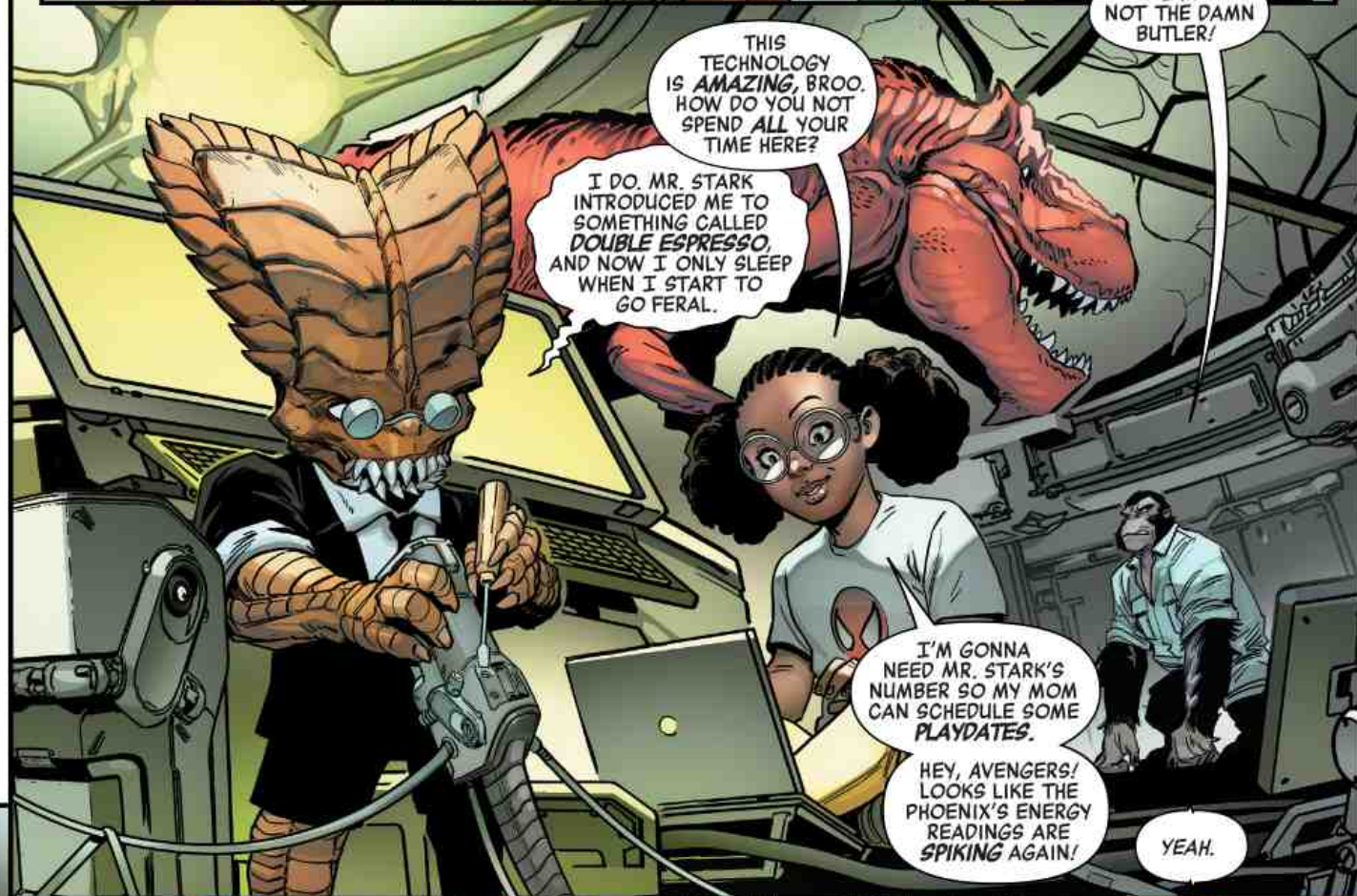
YES, AND
THIS GOD CARRIES
A RATHER LARGE
HAMMER.

THAT PLACE
THE PHOENIX
SENT US... MAN, I'M
TELLING YOU,
DANNY...

...IT WAS
THE WHITEST
PLACE I'VE EVER
SEEN. AND I'VE
BEEN TO THE
HAMPTONS.

GORILLA-MAN,
IF YOU'RE IN THE
CONTROL ROOM,
WHO'S WATCHING
THE BABY?







WE'VE BEEN DOWN THIS ROAD BEFORE. TAKING ON THE PHOENIX FORCE DIRECTLY... THAT'S NOT A FIGHT THE AVENGERS CAN WIN. NOT IF WE WANNA SAVE OUR FRIENDS.

YOU ASK ME, FOR HIM, THIS IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST THE AVENGERS. FOR THOR...

"THIS IS PERSONAL."

I KNOW THIS FLAME WELL. I KNOW IT CANNOT BE REASONED WITH. IT HAS NOT THE FACULTIES.

IT IS ALL BOILING EMOTION AND UNBRIDLED EGO (AYE, THIS IS COMING FROM ME). IT DOES NOT CARE WHO IT HURTS OR RUINS TO ACHIEVE ITS OWN WARPED DESIRES.

IT IS **NARCISSISM** AT ITS FIERY, COSMIC FINEST.



I AM THOR ODINSON.

THUNDER FATHER OF ASGARD.

AND I DESPISE THE PHOENIX.

EVEN IF I CANNOT REMEMBER... EXACTLY WHY.



STONEHENGE.

THE **EBONY BLADE** WAS FORGED OF FALLEN STARSTONE THAT CAME HURLING FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HEAVENS!

THE SAME HEAVENS WHERE THE PHOENIX TURNS WORLDS TO SHATTERED EMBERS!

NOW BEHOLD THE TWO GREAT FORCES UNITED--

--IN THE HANDS OF THE **PHOENIX KNIGHT**!



YOU CARRY A **SWORD**, BUT YOU TALK MORE THAN YOU **STAB**. I WILL TEACH YOU THE SPIRIT OF THE BLADE, PRETENDER...

...WHEN I BURY MINE IN YOUR INNARDS!

ALL THESE PEOPLE OUT HERE ACTING LIKE THEY DON'T WANNA BE THE PHOENIX.

EVEN AS THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER FOR IT.



THE SKIES ABOVE THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE.

AIN'T NOBODY
DON'T WANNA FLY.

HELL, WHY YOU THINK
I'M ALWAYS HAVING
COLOSSUS THROW
ME AROUND?

RRRRRR.

AND AIN'T NOBODY IN
OUR LINE 'A WORK
DON'T APPRECIATE THE
POWER TO COME BACK
FROM THE DEAD.

TODAY'S
A GOOD DAY
TO DIE!

MAYBE IT'S A
POWER WE WORRY
ABOUT CONTROLLING.
LIKE A DRUNK IN A
WAREHOUSE OF
ENDLESS BOOZE.

BUT WE ALL
CONVINCE
OURSELVES
WE COULD.

FOR ONE
MORE DRINK,
AT LEAST.



EASTER ISLAND.

UKRAINE.
THE CHERNOBYL EXCLUSION ZONE.
THE RED FOREST.

THE PHOENIX MAY BE THE SWEETEST FRUIT THAT EVER PLOPPED DOWN OUTTA THE STARS. BUT THE JUICE STILL AIN'T WORTH THE SQUEEZE.

THIS FRUIT COMES WITH A DEADLY PRICE. AND TOO MANY TIMES I'VE WATCHED OTHERS PAY IT.

JEANNIE GOING DARK, RACHEL'S FAMILY GETTING MASSACRED BEFORE HER EYES, HOPE SACRIFICING HER OWN CHILDHOOD TO TRY TO BE A MESSIAH.

I'M DONE LETTING GOOD PEOPLE STEP IN FRONT OF ME TO TAKE BIG FLAMING BULLETS. TAKING BULLETS IS SUPPOSED TO BE MY JOB.

A full-page comic book illustration of Wolverine as the Phoenix. He is depicted in a dynamic, lunging pose, his body glowing with intense orange and yellow flames. His eyes are yellow, and his mouth is open in a roar. He wears his signature brown and black X-Men uniform, which is partially engulfed in fire. His adamantium claws are extended from both hands. The background is a chaotic scene of fire and destruction, with dark, skeletal trees visible in the distance. In the lower-left foreground, there is a large, dark, rectangular object, possibly a piece of machinery or a vehicle, with a yellow triangular radiation warning symbol on its side. Another similar symbol is visible on a smaller object in the lower-right foreground. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, fiery tones of orange, red, and yellow, contrasting with the dark, shadowed areas of the character's uniform and the background.

NAME'S
LOGAN.

WEAPON X.
THE WOLVERINE.

AND NOW I'M
THE DAMN
PHOENIX.

YEAH, BELIEVE ME,
BUB, I'M JUST AS
DAMN SCARED AS
YOU ARE.

IS IT HER HISTORY
WITH MY FATHER
THAT IRKS ME SO?

DAY.

MOST EVERYTHING
IN EXISTENCE HAS
AN UNEASY HISTORY
WITH MY FATHER.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
ELSE.

SOME CONNECTION
OF MY OWN WITH THE
PHOENIX FORCE.

SOMETHING
I'VE FELT TIME
AND AGAIN...

...BUT COULD NEVER
QUITE PUT MY
MIGHTY FINGER ON.

GODS HELP ME.
IT FEELS
ALMOST LIKE...

ENOUGH
OF THIS!

...LIKE SOME
FORM OF LOVE.

I HAVE NO
WISH TO FIGHT
HERE TODAY, GOD
OF THUNDER! YOU,
LEAST OF ALL!

IT'S
TIME YOU
KNEW THE TRUTH
OF YOUR OWN
EXISTENCE.

THE SECRET
YOUR FATHER
ODIN HAS HIDDEN
FROM YOU FOR
CENTURIES.

I'VE COME
TO TELL YOU
EVERYTHING.

MY
SON.



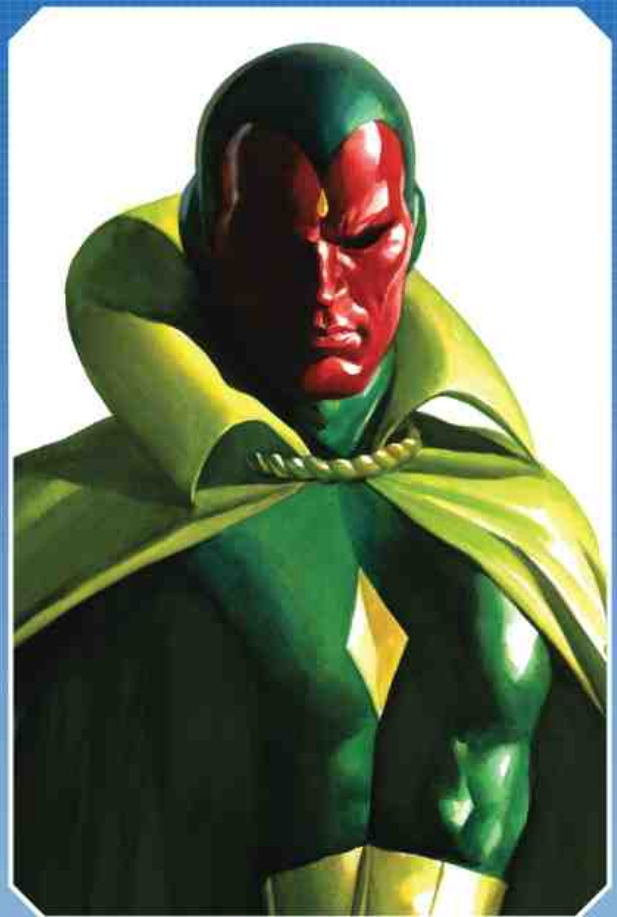
ALEX ROSS
42 TIMELESS SKETCH VARIANT



ALEX ROSS
42 TIMELESS VARIANT



ALEX ROSS
43 TIMELESS SKETCH VARIANT



ALEX ROSS
43 TIMELESS VARIANT

43 ENTER THE PHOENIX PART 4
"IN THE BEGINNING...THERE WAS NOT DARKNESS"



CHERNOBYL.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SAID...THAT IN THE BEGINNING... THERE WAS DARKNESS.

BUT THAT IS A LIE.

A LIE TOLD BY THE SIMPEMINDED BEASTS...

...WHO STUMBLED OUT OF THAT DARKNESS.

THE GODS AND MEN.

SO ARROGANT THEY BELIEVED NOTHING OF NOTE COULD'VE EXISTED BEFORE THEM.

BUT THE TRUTH IS, IN THE BEGINNING...

...BEFORE ALL THAT WOULD EVER BE HAD HATCHED...

...THERE WASN'T DARKNESS AT ALL.

THERE WAS FIRE.

OUR FIRE.

BEFORE THERE WERE WORLDS OR STARS OR THE BLACK RIVERS OF SPACE RUSHING BETWEEN THEM...

...THERE WAS THE PHOENIX.

AND WE LOOKED UPON AN INFINITY OF OUR BEAUTIFUL FLAME...

...AND WANTED FOR NOTHING.

UNTIL THE TIME CAME...

...THAT WE HUNGRED.



ADAMANTIUM.

CUTS
THROUGH
BONES LIKE
THEY'RE BUTTER.
CAN'T BE
BROKEN.

AND IT'S
PRETTY MUCH
ALL I'M MADE OF.
OTHER THAN
BACON AND
BEER.

YOU CAN'T
BEAT ME,
T'CHALLA. TELL
THE PHOENIX YOU
WANNA TAKE
THE L.



A FINE ALLOY,
ADAMANTIUM.

YET ALL
SOMEONE
COULD THINK
TO DO WITH
IT...



...WAS BUILD
BIGGER KNIVES
AND **STRONGER**
BONES.

GAAGGH!



VIBRANIUM
BUILT A
NATION!

FROM THE FIRE OF
THE PHOENIX, ALL
THINGS WERE BORN.



AND IT'S
STRONG ENOUGH TO
DO WHAT NO MAN OR
MUTANT ALONE COULD
ACCOMPLISH.

IF IT COMES
TO IT, THE VIBRANIUM
TECHNOLOGY OF WAKANDA
CAN ABSORB THE PHOENIX.
AND SAVE THE--

BECAUSE THE PHOENIX HUNGERED,
AN ORCHARD WAS GROWN--WITH
PLANETS AS THE RIPENING FRUIT.



HRRGGH...

THE
PHOENIX IS...
SENDING MORE
POWER.

TRYING TO
OVERLOAD
MY--

IT TOOK US A FEW
BILLION YEARS
TO EVEN NOTICE...

...THAT SOME OF
THOSE FRUITS HAD
BECOME INFESTED
WITH PARASITES.



RRRRRGGH!
ANCESTORS,
HELP ME! THE
VIBRANIUM...
WILL HOLD!

THE BLACK
PANTHER WILL
HOLD!



YOU--AND ALL YOUR KIND--
YOU ARE *WORMS* TO US.

NICE PLAN,
BUB. LET ME
SHOW YOU HOW
IT ENDS.



AND EVERYTHING
YOU'VE EVER
GAZED AT WITH
WONDER AND AWE...

...WAS NOTHING
BUT THE *ASH*
FROM OUR FIRE.

SNIKT

SNIKT



SO... STILL FEEL LIKE BECOMING THE ALL-NEW PHOENIX?



IF SO, MAYBE I OUGHTA GO AHEAD AND POP THIS OTHER CLAW. SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE OF *BURNING* THAT BIG FANCY BRAIN OF YOURS.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, YOUR HIGHNESS?

I SAY... I WOULD BLOCK IT.



YOU'D DO WHAT NOW?

YOUR CLAW. THE ONE THAT CUTS BONES LIKE BUTTER.

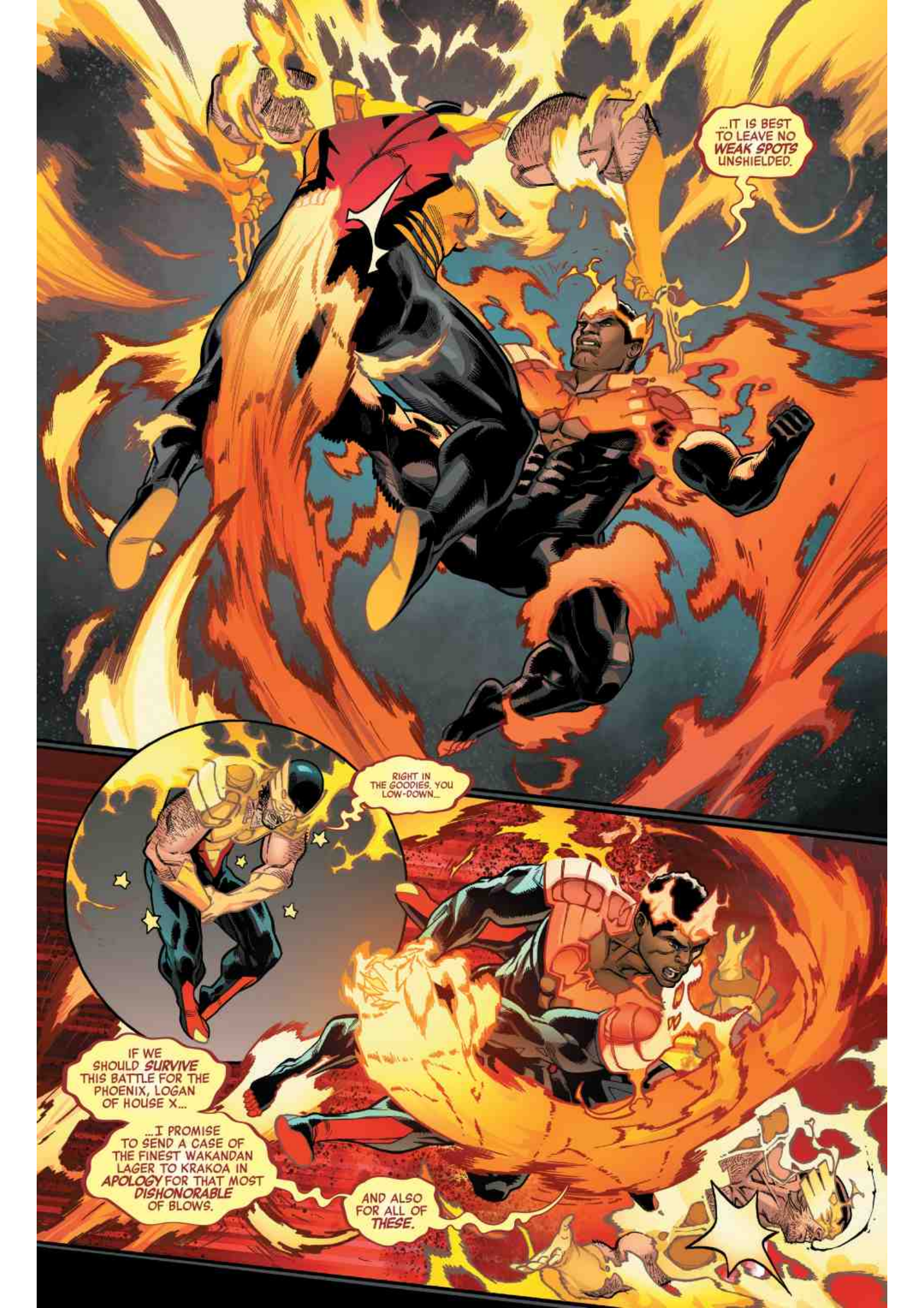
I WOULD BLOCK IT, WOLVERINE.

WITH MY TEETH.



YOU GOTTA BE @#\$% ME.

WHEN ONE LACES THEIR ENTIRE BODY WITH PRECIOUS METAL, I HAVE FOUND...



...IT IS BEST
TO LEAVE NO
WEAK SPOTS
UNSHIELDED.

RIGHT IN
THE GOODIES, YOU
LOW-DOWN...

IF WE
SHOULD **SURVIVE**
THIS BATTLE FOR THE
PHOENIX, LOGAN
OF HOUSE X...

...I PROMISE
TO SEND A CASE OF
THE FINEST WAKANDAN
LAGER TO KRAKOA IN
APOLOGY FOR THAT MOST
DISHONORABLE
OF BLOWS.

AND ALSO
FOR ALL OF
THESE.



KNOW THAT
I ONLY RESORT TO
SUCH TACTICS BECAUSE
YOU HAVE ENTERED THIS
TRIAL WITH **MURDER**
IN YOUR HEART.

RRRGGGH!

AND THAT
IS **EXACTLY**
WHY YOU CANNOT
BE ALLOWED TO
EMERGE
VICTORIOUS.

**DEATH
AND REBIRTH.**
THE ETERNAL CYCLE
OF THE COSMIC
FIREBIRD. WE WILL
NOT BREAK THAT
CYCLE WITH MORE
DEATH.

TOGETHER,
YOU AND I, AS
GODLY MEN, AS
WOEFUL
SINNERS...

...WE MUST
PRAY FOR
REBIRTH WITH
OUR OWN
BLOOD.

COME
ON!!!

BUT
MOSTLY
WITH **YOURS**,
I'M AFRAID.

EASTER ISLAND.



DAMMIT, JEN!

WE SHOULD'N'T BE FIGHTING EACH OTHER OVER THE PHOENIX!



BUT I CAN'T WALK AWAY WHEN YOU'RE OUT OF CONTROL LIKE THIS!

BY THE EYE OF ODIN, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?



BECAME A HULK!

HHHHRRGGH!!!





BUT
NOT OUT OF
CONTROL!

KNOW
WHAT I'M
DOING!

KNOW YOU
DON'T HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES!

DON'T
HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES?!



I WAS
THOR!
NOW I'M
THE STRONGEST
VALKYRIE WHO'S
EVER LIVED!

YOU THINK
I CAN'T
HANDLE THE
PHOENIX?!



NOT
TALKING ABOUT
PHOENIX.

TALKING
ABOUT KILLING
NAMOR!!!

STONEHENGE.





AVENGERS MOUNTAIN.

BLADE TO GORILLA-MAN. GOT ONE TO TELEPORT STRAIGHT TO THE MOUNTAIN'S MED BAY.



DAMN TOURNAMENT IS CLEARLY GOING WELL.

UUGH.



WHO DID YOU IN, EAGLE?

PRETTY SURE IT WAS THE NEXT DAMN PHOENIX. SHANNA THE FLAMING SHE-PHOENIX. AND HER SABRETOOTH FIRE TIGER.

WELL, LET'S HOPE SHE DIDN'T BEAT ALL THE FIGHT OUTTA YOU...



...BECAUSE
WE GOT PLENTY
HERE TOO!

FOR
NAMOR! FOR THE
PHOENIX KING!

THEY ARE
SUCH SIMPLE,
PREDICTABLE
CREATURES.

THESE WRETCHED
DROPPINGS OF
A DISEASED
CELESTIAL.

WHY DO
WE COVET
THEM SO?

HER FAULT,
NO DOUBT.

THE ONE WHO
COMMITTED
THE GREATEST
SIN OF ALL.

WHAT DID
YOU JUST
CALL ME?

I CALLED
YOU WHAT YOU
ARE. IT'S NOT JUST
THE BLOOD OF THE
GODS THAT FLOWS
THROUGH YOUR
VEINS.

BY GIVING US A
REASON TO CARE.

IT'S MINE
AS WELL. FOR
I AM YOUR TRUE
MOTHER.

MY
BELOVED
THOR.
PHOENIX-
SON.

no...

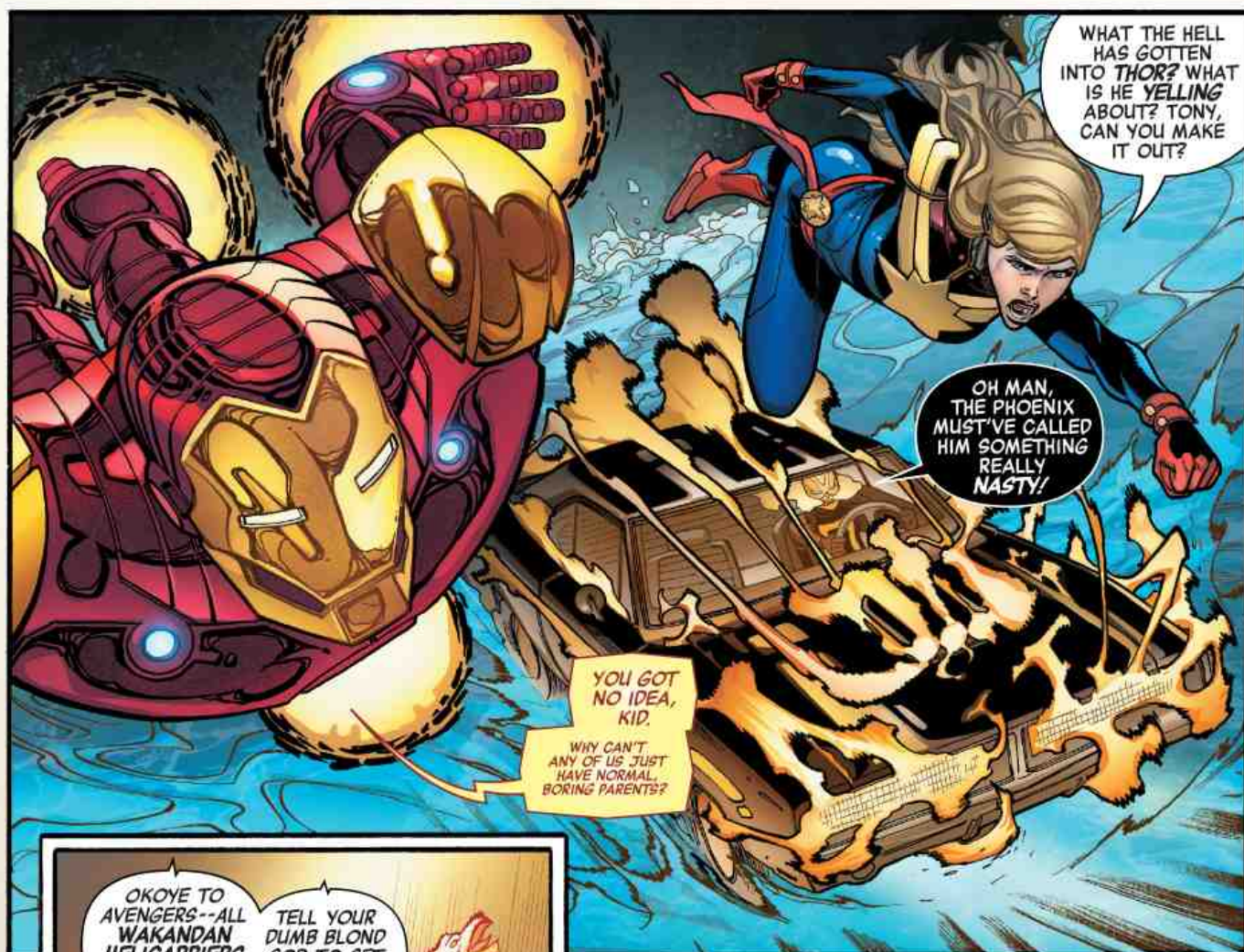


...YOU WOULD NOT EXIST IF NOT FOR THE PHOENIX.

YOU ARE A CHILD OF FIRE AND THUNDER.

MY CHILD, I'VE COME HOME TO YOU AT LAST, MY SON.

RAY! YOU ARE NOT THE MOTHER OF THOR!!!



WHAT THE HELL HAS GOTTEN INTO THOR? WHAT IS HE YELLING ABOUT? TONY, CAN YOU MAKE IT OUT?

OH MAN, THE PHOENIX MUST'VE CALLED HIM SOMETHING REALLY NASTY!

YOU GOT NO IDEA, KID.

WHY CAN'T ANY OF US JUST HAVE NORMAL, BORING PARENTS?

OKOYE TO AVENGERS--ALL WAKANDAN HELICARRIERS ARE STANDING BY TO FIRE.

TELL YOUR DUMB BLOND GOD TO GET OUT OF THE WAY.

THIS IS STARK. BELAY THAT ORDER, OKOYE.

"THIS WHOLE SITUATION JUST GOT A LOT MORE PERSONAL."

THE ALL-FATHER OF ASGARD DOESN'T BELIEVE A WORD THAT COMES FROM YOUR WRETCHED WORLD-DEVOURING LIPS, DEVIL BIRD!

WHAT YOU BELIEVE DOESN'T CHANGE THE TRUTH. OR THE REASON THE PHOENIX IS REALLY HERE.



SHE'S KEPT
ME BURIED DEEP
INSIDE HER FOR
THOUSANDS OF
YEARS.

BUT WHEN
THE FINAL HOST
CAME TO EARTH...
IT PULLED ME OUT
OF THE DEPTHS.

THE PHOENIX
REMEMBERS
YOU NOW.

GARRGGH!!!

REMEMBERS
HER LOVE FOR
YOU. WHETHER
SHE LIKES IT
OR NOT.

THIS
DOES NOT
FEEL LIKE
LOVE!

THE PHOENIX
IS WRESTLING
WITH A MOTHER'S
FEARS.

SHE HOPES
A NEW AVATAR
WILL BURN THE
PAIN AWAY.



BECAUSE
OF YOU,
THOR.

THE
PHOENIX
IS HERE FOR
YOU.

COME
TO US.

AND FEEL
THE FIRE OF
YOUR MOTHER'S
LOVE.



DON'T WORRY--I GOT YOU, BIG GUY!

LOOKED LIKE THE PHOENIX KNOCKED YOU SILLY BACK THERE. AND I KNOW KNOCKED-SILLY. I JUST WENT NINE ROUNDS WITH THE SAVAGE JEN.

HEY, IF I'M CARRYING YOU AND YOU'RE CARRYING THE HAMMER, DOES THAT MEAN I'M STILL WORTHY?

JANE FOSTER...



UNHAND ME!

UH, THOR. THE WHOLE TIME JEN WAS SMASHING ME, SHE HAD THIS LOOK IN HER EYE THAT REALLY FREAKED ME OUT.

AND RIGHT NOW, WELL, ALL-FATHER ODINSON...

...YOU GOT THE SAME DAMN LOOK IN YOURS.



DO NOT CALL ME... THAT NAME.

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS FIRE. AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY CAME THE THUNDER.

THE WHITE HOT ROOM.



SO JUST HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT THE PHOENIX, NAMOR? BAD ENOUGH TO KILL FOR IT?

HMPH.



BAD ENOUGH TO KILL ME?

BECAUSE THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHAT YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IF THAT BELL DINGS AND YOU AND I ARE UP NEXT.



IF YOU THINK I WOULD *HESITATE* TO SHATTER EVERY BONE IN YOUR AIR-BREATHING FACE, ROGERS...

...MERELY BECAUSE I'VE ALLOWED YOU THE HONOR OF FIGHTING BY MY SIDE IN THE PAST...

...THEN YOU UNDERSTAND *NOTHING* OF NAMOR AND WHAT I WILL DO TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA.



BELIEVE ME, I KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE WHAT YOU CAN DO.

AND ALSO EVERY SINGLE THING YOU *CAN'T*.

SO IS IT JUST *US*, THEN?





FROM FIRE, THE
PHOENIX MADE
ALL THAT IS.



AND TO FIRE,
ALL THINGS
MUST RETURN.



BUT FIRST, A
NEW WORM MUST
BE CHOSEN.

YEAH. I
WAS AFRAID
OF THIS.

DON'T SUPPOSE
THE BIRD WILL LET
US SETTLE THINGS
WITH ROCK, PAPER,
SCISSORS?

I SUSPECT
NOT, MY
FRIEND.



ONLY
SHIELD AND
CLAWS WILL
DO.

TODAY
THAT WILL
BE DECIDED.

NO MATTER
WHOSE
BLOOD MUST
BE SPILLED.

TODAY THE
NEW PHOENIX
WILL BE BORN.

44 ENTER THE PHOENIX PART 5
"I AM...PHOENIX!"





**AVENGERS
MOUNTAIN.
THE NORTH POLE.**



YOU'VE
BEEN WORKING ON
YOUR SIDE KICK,
CAPTAIN.



IT'S BEEN A
WHALE OF A YEAR,
PANTHER. I'VE BEEN
WORKING ON
EVERYTHING.

AND I SEE
YOU FINALLY
GOT RID OF THAT
HITCH IN YOUR
ROUNDHOUSE.



WHAT
HITCH IN
MY--

UGGH!



AND THEY
CALL ME THE
DEVIOUS
ONE.

I'M NOT
THE ONE WHO
KICKED LOGAN IN
THE COBBLESTONES.

TELL ME
WE'RE NOT JUST
FIGHTING EACH
OTHER HERE,
T'CHALLA.



*BACK IN
ISSUE #1. --TOM



SINCE I
DISCOVERED THOSE
MILLION-YEAR-OLD CAVE
PAINTINGS, STARK HAS COME
FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE
PREHISTORIC HEROES
THEY REPRESENTED.

THOR HAS
BECOME THE
ALL-FATHER
OF ASGARD.

ROBERTO HAS
GROWN INTO THE
MOST POWERFUL
GHOST RIDER THE
WORLD'S EVER
SEEN.



THE
STARBRAND
HAS BEEN
REBORN.

AND A
BLACK PANTHER
LEADS THE
AVENGERS.

THE SPIRITS
OF THE PAST
ARE SPEAKING TO
US, STEVEN.



WE
NEED THE
PHOENIX.

OR ELSE
THE EARTH MAY
NOT SURVIVE
THIS AGE OF
CHAOS.



AND WHAT
IF IT'S THE
PHOENIX WE
WON'T
SURVIVE?

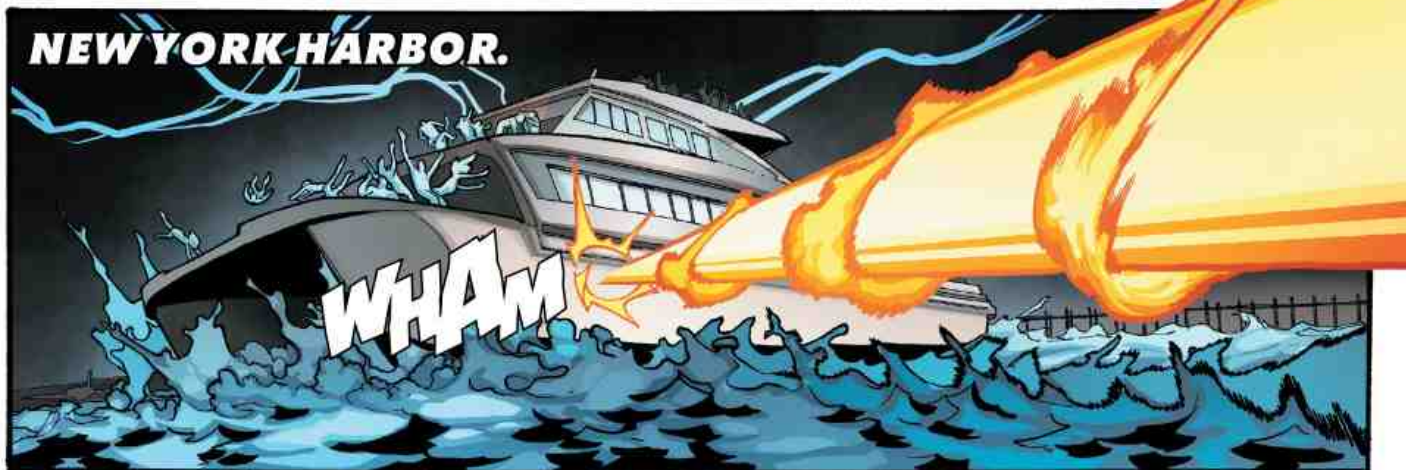


THE BURNING
HAS BEGUN, MY
FRIEND. AND IF WE
ARE NOT THE ONES
HOLDING THE
TORCH...



...IT MEANS
WE ARE TIED TO
THE STAKE.

NEW YORK HARBOR.



PEOPLE OF THE FERRY!

TRY TO STAY CALM!

I'LL GET YOU TO SHORE--

AAAARRRGHH!!!

DON'T YOU HEAR IT SCREAMING INSIDE YOUR BRAIN? IT DOESN'T WANT US CODDLING THESE WRETCHES BY SAVING THEM.

THE FIRES OF THE PHOENIX SHOULD BE USED TO FORGE THEM!

I WILL MAKE THE WHOLE WORLD INTO THE RED ROOM!



YOU LIKE
TO PLAY IN THE
JUNGLE, BUT YOU'RE
TOO *Pretty* TO
BELONG WITH THE
ANIMALS.

NO ONE
HAS EVER CALLED
ME *Pretty*.

I AM MADE
OF *SCABS AND
SCARS*! MY LIFE HAS
BEEN SPENT BEING
GROUND INTO A
LIVING WEAPON!

NOW I'LL
BE THE *RED WIDOW*
WHO ASSASSINATES
WORLDS!

I AM FIRE
AND DEATH
INCARNATE!
I AM--

YOU
THINK YOU'RE
SAVAGE?!

LADY, I'LL
SHOW YOU
SAVAGE!

I'M *SHANNA*,
THE FLAMING
SHE-DEVIL, QUEEN
OF THE *SAVAGE
FLAME*!

I
AM...

**MOSCOW.
RED SQUARE.**

«AEROSPACE
DEFENSE TO HIGH
COMMAND. WE ARE
UNABLE TO SHOOT
DOWN THE
TARGETS.»

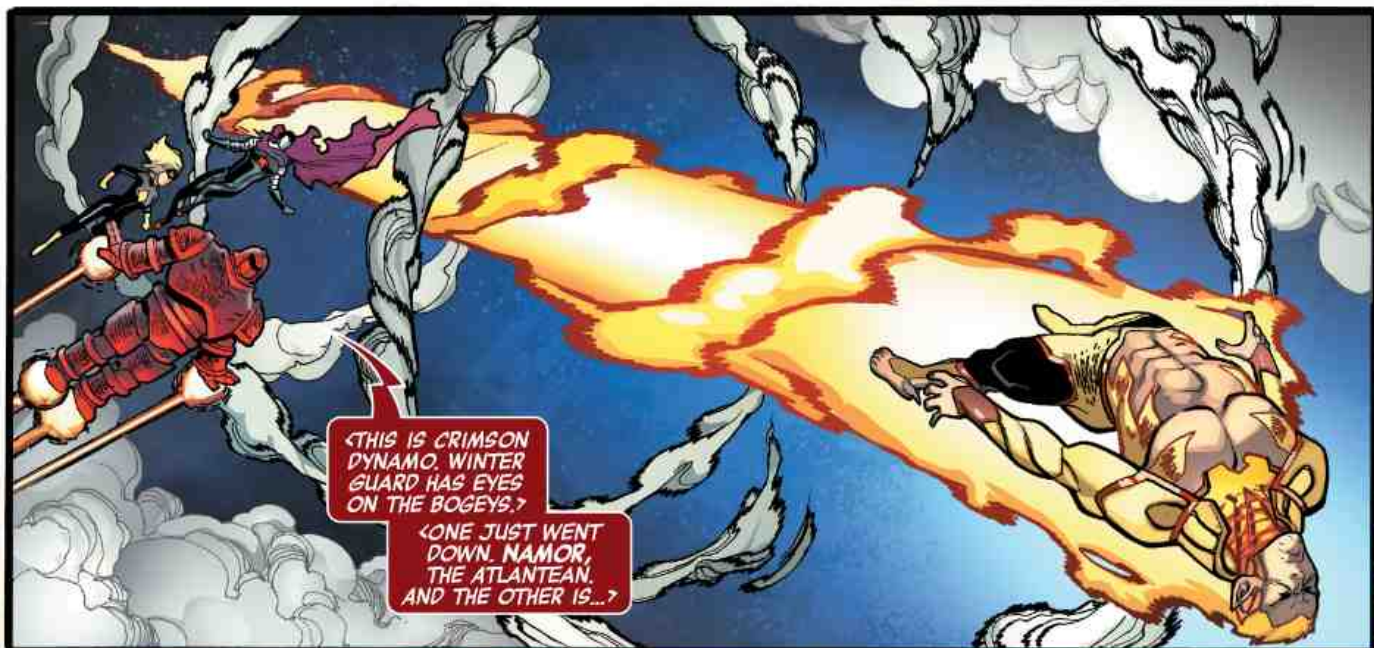
«REQUESTING
THE WINTER GUARD!
REPEAT--REQUESTING
RUSSIA'S MIGHTIEST
HEROES!?»

YOU CAN'T
HANDLE BEING A
PHOENIX! BY THE
LEVIATHAN, LOOK
AT YOURSELF,
JENNIFER!

YOU
CAN'T EVEN
HANDLE BEING
A HULK!

DON'T
CARE ABOUT
PHOENIX.

JUST
CARE ABOUT
SMASHING
YOU!







AVENGERS, THIS IS **MOON GIRL**, FROM INSIDE YOUR BIG, CREEPY MAN-QUARTERS. THERE ARE PHOENIX EXPLOSIONS IN MOSCOW AND NEW YORK HARBOR.

THE **BIG BIRD'S** RADIATION LEVEL JUST JUMPED TO ABOUT THAT OF A GOOD-SIZED NEUTRON STAR.

AND DOES ANYBODY ELSE SEE **CAPTAIN AMERICA** AND **BLACK PANTHER** FIGHTING ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN?

I'VE SEEN ABOUT ENOUGH OF THIS INSANITY!

I'LL **ABSORB** WHATEVER I CAN!

THEN TAKE YOUR SHOT, **TONY!**

BIG DADDY AND I ARE SYNCED AND LOADED, **CAROL**.

JUST HOLD THE SPACE DUCK STEADY FOR ME, KID.







PRETTY SURE
I DIED TODAY.



DEFINITELY
FELT LIKE
DYING.

THE BURNING COLD,
THE FEELING OF
FALLING FOREVER
THROUGH DARKNESS.

BUT THEN I FELT
SOMETHING ELSE.



FELT *EMBERS*
INSIDE ME
THAT REFUSED
TO GO OUT.



I FELT MYSELF
GROW WINGS.

WINGS
OF FIRE.

AAAAARRRGH!!!

DON'T THINK IT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN THIS WAY.



BUT JUDGING BY ALL THE NEW
MEMORIES OF TIMES LONG
PAST RUSHING THROUGH
MY HEAD, GETTING CHOSEN IS
NEVER ABOUT BEING A **WINNER**.



RRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHH!!!

TO BE THE PHOENIX,
YOU HAVE TO
SUFFER. YOU HAVE
TO HAVE **FALLEN**.



JENNIFER.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOUR FIGHT HAS
ENDED.

HHHRGH?



AND I
CERTAINLY
FELL.

THOUGH NOT
WITHOUT SOMEONE
GIVING ME A **PUSH**.



THE POWER!
THERE'S **MORE**
OF IT HERE--I
CAN FEEL IT!

IT'S MINE/
NAMOR WILL BE
THE LAST PHOENIX
STANDING
WHEN--









...THE
SON OF THE
THUNDERBIRD.

THE BLOOD OF THE
CHEYENNE FLOWS
THROUGH MY VEINS.



noooo!!!!

LIKE MANY OF THE NATIVE TRIBES,
MY PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED
IN A WINGED SPIRIT OF *CHANGE*.



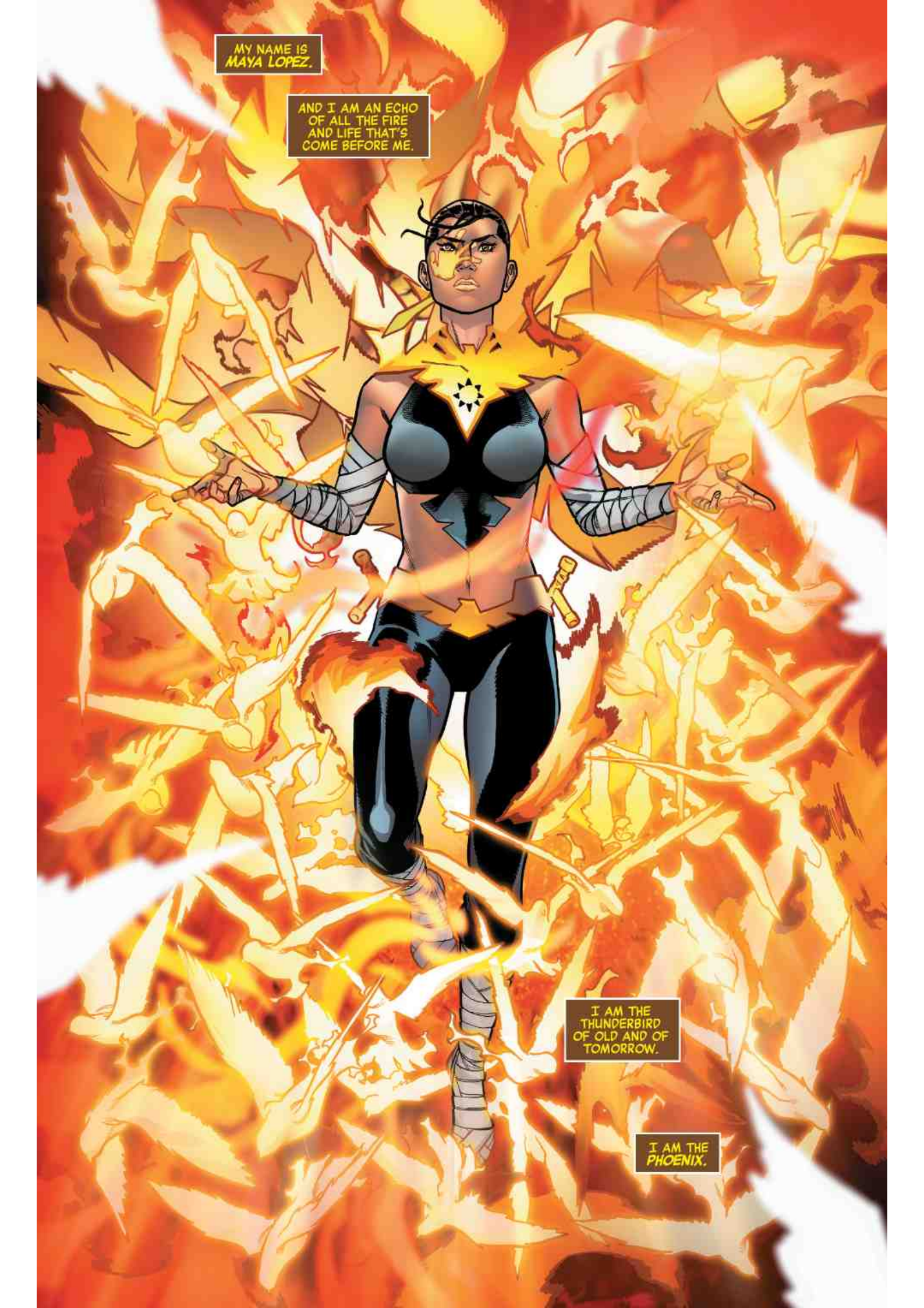
A GREAT BIRD OF
FIRE THAT BRINGS
THE SUMMER.



THAT PROTECTS US FROM THE
THINGS THAT WOULD FEED ON US,
IN THE DARKNESS AND THE SEA.

IN THE LONG,
COLD WINTER.

TODAY, FOR BETTER
OR WORSE, I HAVE
BECOME THAT CHANGE.

A full-page comic book illustration of Maya Lopez. She is a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a black and yellow superhero suit. The suit has a yellow star-like emblem on the chest and a yellow lightning bolt on the waist. She has grey bandages on her forearms and right leg. She stands with her arms outstretched, palms facing forward, amidst a massive, intense fire that fills the entire background. The flames are bright orange and yellow, with many sharp, flame-like shapes reaching towards her. The overall mood is powerful and dramatic.

MY NAME IS
MAYA LOPEZ.

AND I AM AN ECHO
OF ALL THE FIRE
AND LIFE THAT'S
COME BEFORE ME.

I AM THE
THUNDERBIRD
OF OLD AND OF
TOMORROW.

I AM THE
PHOENIX.

THE MOON.
THE SUMMER HOUSE.



MAYA...
IF YOU CAN
HEAR ME...
...DON'T TRY
TO DO THIS
ALONE.



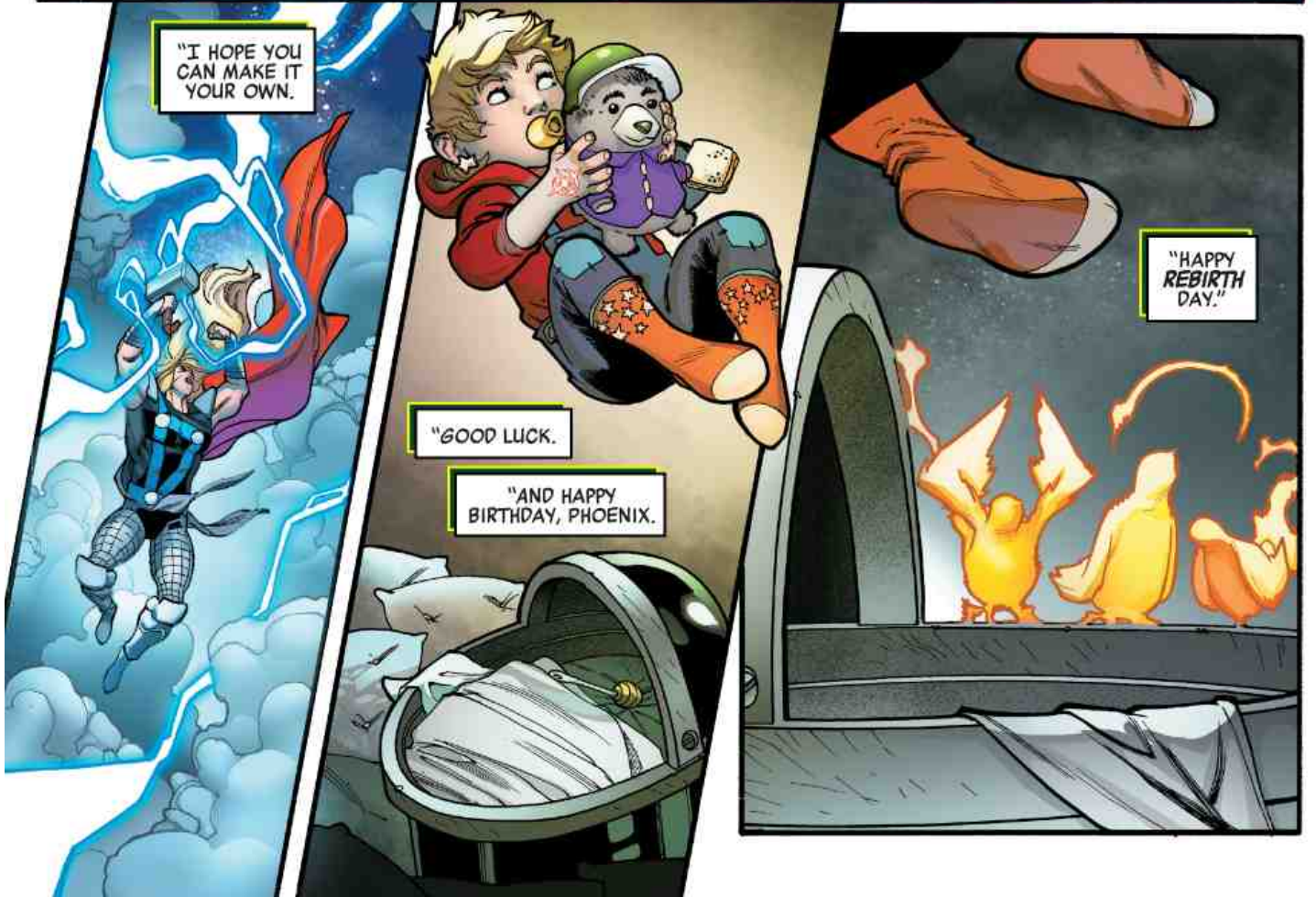


"YOU'RE A LONER. IT LIKES LONERS. BUT YOU CAN'T LET IT ISOLATE YOU FROM THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HUMAN."



"NOT IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR SOUL."

"AND I HOPE FOR ALL OUR SAKES YOU DO."

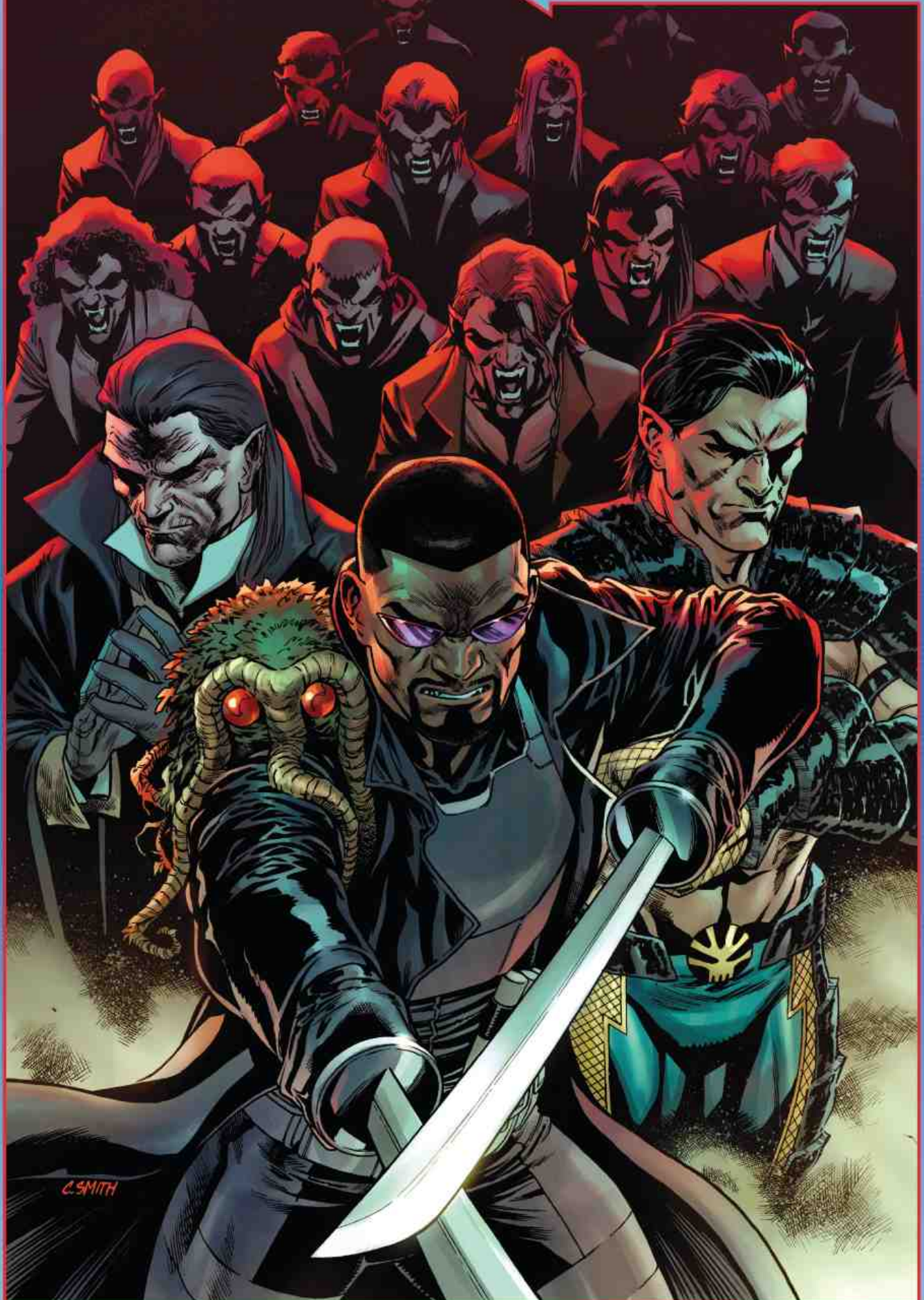


"I HOPE YOU CAN MAKE IT YOUR OWN."

"GOOD LUCK."

"AND HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PHOENIX."

"HAPPY REBIRTH DAY."



PREVIOUSLY IN *KING IN BLACK*:

KNULL, THE CREATOR AND GOD OF THE ALIEN SYMBIOTES, LED A HORDE OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS TO EARTH. THE EARTH'S HEROES, INCLUDING THE AVENGERS, MANAGED TO DEFEAT KNULL AFTER A MIGHTY BATTLE AND GREAT SACRIFICE. MEMBERS OF THE AVENGERS ALSO WERE FORCED TO PARTICIPATE IN A TOURNAMENT TO DETERMINE THE NEW HOST OF THE COSMIC PHOENIX FORCE, WITH ECHO EMERGING THE VICTOR. AS THE AVENGERS DEAL WITH THE FALLOUT OF THESE RECENT EVENTS, OLD ENEMIES LURK IN THE SHADOWS—INCLUDING DRACULA AND HIS VAMPIRE NATION.



**YESTERDAY.
NEW YORK CITY.**
THE FINAL BATTLE AGAINST KNULL.

SO SAY YOU'RE THE
GHOST RIDER.

WORLD'S
HARDEST WORKING
SUPERNATURAL
GEARHEAD.

THE ONLY AVENGER
WHOSE LAST DAY JOB
PAID AN HOURLY WAGE.

AND IT'S THE MORNING
AFTER YOU AND ALL YOUR
MIGHTY FRIENDS WERE PART
OF THE EPIC BATTLE
TO SAVE THE EARTH...

...FROM THE KING OF THE
CREEPY SPACE GODS AND
HIS ARMY OF GOOEY
SUPER-DRAGONS.

**TODAY.
THE ARCTIC CIRCLE.
AVENGERS MOUNTAIN.**

YOU MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO
THINK YOU DESERVE TO TAKE THE
MORNING *OFF*, AM I RIGHT?

BUT THAT AIN'T THE WAY
THE PROCESS WORKS
AROUND THESE PARTS.

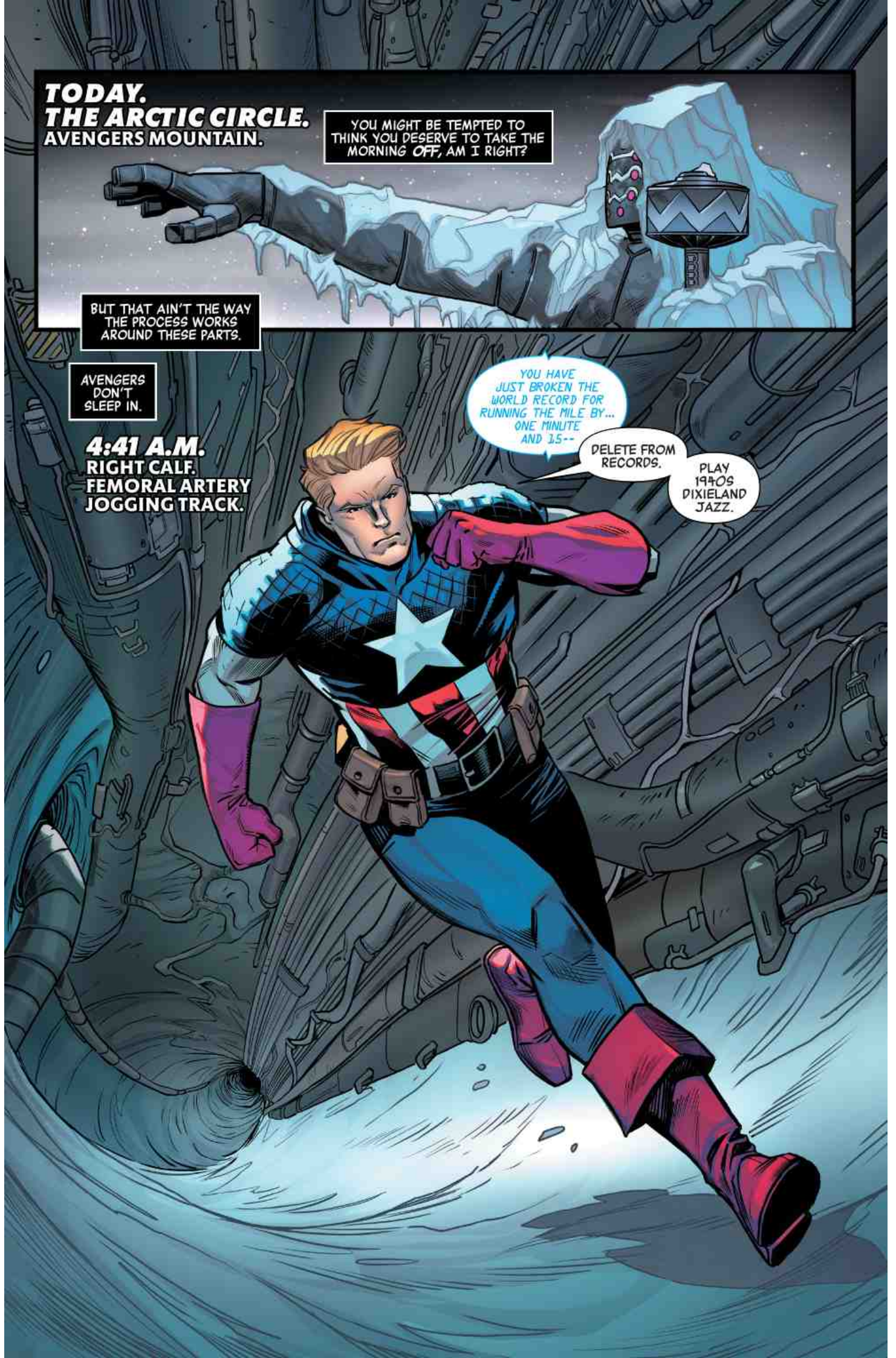
AVENGERS
DON'T
SLEEP IN.

4:41 A.M.
RIGHT CALF.
FEMORAL ARTERY
JOGGING TRACK.

YOU HAVE
JUST BROKEN THE
WORLD RECORD FOR
RUNNING THE MILE BY...
ONE MINUTE
AND 35--

DELETE FROM
RECORDS.

PLAY
1940S
DIXIELAND
JAZZ.



HERE AT THE **NORTH POLE**, WE'RE FARTHER FROM CIVILIZATION THAN ASTRONAUTS IN THEIR SPACE STATIONS.

5:13 A.M.
LEFT BICEP.
AVENGERS
STRENGTH AND
CONDITIONING
CENTER.

YOU HAVE
JUST BROKEN
THE WORLD RECORD
FOR FREE LIFT
BY 5,478 POU--

DELETE FROM
RECORDS.

PLAY
ENGINE SOUNDS
OF THE XB-70
VALKYRIE.

SO WE MAKE OUR
OWN CIVILIZATION.
THE MOST EFFICIENT
ONE YOU CAN IMAGINE.

5:24 A.M.
RIGHT LUNG.
LIBRARY OF
INTERGALACTIC LAW.

RGH!
GORILLA-MAN!
COFFEE!

HERE, WHERE ALL **TIME ZONES**
MEET, ONE ROOM OF THE
MOUNTAIN EXISTS HOURS APART
FROM THE ONE NEXT DOOR.

5:38 A.M.
"MUSTACHE" MEZZANINE.
TONY STARK'S LOCKER ROOM.

CONGRATULATIONS,
YOUR MODIFICATIONS
HAVE INCREASED
REPULSOR EFFICIENCY
BY...35%.

DELETE
THE WORD
"CONGRATULATIONS"
FROM YOUR
VOCABULARY.

PLAY
EXASPERATED
SIGHS OF MY
FATHER.

SO WE MAKE
OUR OWN TIME.

5:59 A.M.
APPENDIX.
THE EDEN ROOM.

MOUNTAIN!
THOR HAS RETURNED
FROM A NIGHT OF
CELEBRATING VICTORY! *
PLAY DRUMS AND
WAILING!

WARNING:
SCANS SHOW YOUR
SYSTEM CONTAINS ENOUGH
ALCOHOL TO ANESTHETIZE
A HERD OF FULL-
GROWN--

DELETE
FROM THY
RECORDS!

*CATCH THE CELEBRATION IN
BETA-RAY BILL #1. --TOM

SUNRISE HAPPENS
ONCE A YEAR AND
LASTS A MONTH.

6:03 A.M.
RIGHT FOOT.
SEA HANGAR.

MOUNTAIN.
PLAY IT
AGAIN.

HEY, ROBBIE!
IT'S ME, GABE,
YOUR BROTHER! I
LOVE YOU, ROBBIE!
JUST WANTED TO
SAY THAT IN CASE
YOU FORGOT!

HAVE A
GREAT DAY
AT WORK!

THE REST OF THE TIME,
THERE'S NOTHING HERE
BUT DARKNESS.

6:16 A.M.
LEFT FIST.
AUTOMATED
MANDROID
COMBAT RANGE.

TRAINING PROGRAM
"KILL ALL VAMPIRES"
HAS BEEN COMPLETED.
WOULD YOU LIKE
TO--

SHUT UP
AND RUN IT
AGAIN!

SO WE ARE OUR OWN LIGHT.

**CROWN LEVEL.
KING T'CHALLA'S
PENTHOUSE.**

COMMENCE
MEETING. READ
TODAY'S
SCHEDULE.

CURRENT
MEETING ENDS AT
6:45 A.M. AVENGERS
MOUNTAIN TIME.

6:50, FINISH
REVIEWING ALL
GLOBAL COMBAT
SURVEILLANCE
FOOTAGE MARKED
"AVENGERS VS.
KING IN
BLACK."

ALREADY
DONE.

EMAIL
POST-FIGHT
PERFORMANCE
GRADES TO EACH
AVENGER, INCLUDING
NOTES ON
DEFICIENCIES AND
SUGGESTED POINTS
OF TRAINING
EMPHASIS.

INCLUDING
YOUR OWN
DEFICIENCIES?

OF
COURSE.

IF
THERE ARE
ANY.



THE
LEGACIES.

ARE YOU
GOVERNING WITH
YOUR HEAD?

AND THE LESSONS
WE LEARN FROM
THOSE WHO'VE
BEEN CALLED TO
SERVE BEFORE US.

OR
WITH YOUR
HEART?

A BIT OF
BOTH, FATHER.
JUST AS YOU
TAUGHT ME.

HERE IN OUR BUBBLE,
WE HAVE ONE JOB
AND ONE JOB ONLY.

WELL
DONE, MY
SON.

MY
KING.

TO WORK LIKE IT'S THE
LAST DAY WE'LL EVER
HAVE ON THIS EARTH.

HARD-LIGHT
HOLOGRAM
DEACTIVATING.

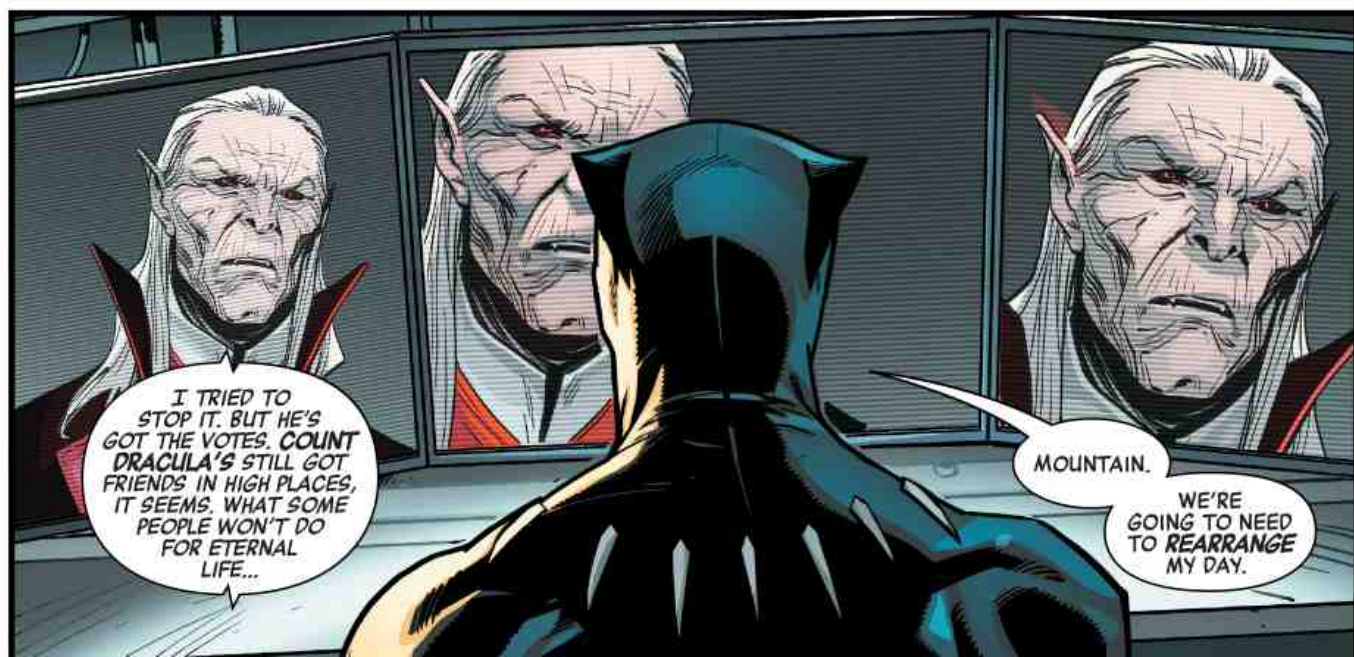
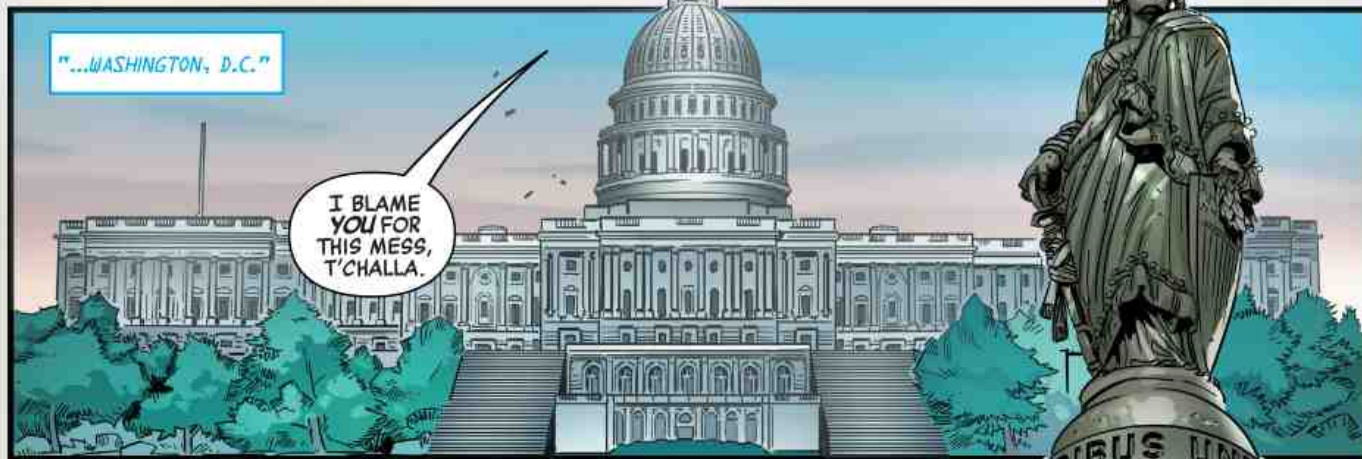
YOU'VE FINISHED
SPARRING THREE
MINUTES EARLY. WOULD
YOU LIKE TO COMPLETE
YOUR 200 PUSHUPS
FOR THE DAY?

LATER.

BECAUSE WHEN YOU'RE
AN AVENGER, YOU BETTER
BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE
SOMEWHERE IS PLANNING TO
MAKE IT **EXACTLY** THAT.

I HAVE A
FEELING I'M
ABOUT TO
RECEIVE A PHONE
CALL.

INCOMING
CALL FROM...



CHERNOBYL

WE
FOUGHT FOR
YOU.

WHEN THE
DARKEST OF NIGHTS
CAME OVER THE WORLD
AND EVERYTHING YOU LOVE
WAS IMPERILED BY THIS...
SO-CALLED KING IN
BLACK...

...MY PEOPLE
STOOD BY YOUR
SIDE ON THE
BATTLEFIELD.

WE DID
THIS...DESPITE
YOUR LONG HISTORY
OF **PERSECUTION**
WHEN IT COMES
TO OUR KIND.

I HAVE
HEARD THE
SAME **LIES** FOR
CENTURIES.

IN THE SAME
WAY YOU HAVE LONG
SLANDERED MUTANTS AS
SAVAGES AND SUBHUMANS,
SO HAVE YOU SOUGHT TO
TARNISH **COUNT**
DRACULA AND HIS
CHILDREN.

INSTEAD OF
BEING LOOKED UPON
WITH SYMPATHY AS THE
UNIQUELY CHALLENGED
VICTIMS OF **IMMUNE**
DEFICIENCY THAT WE ARE,
MY PEOPLE AND I ARE
LABELED **MONSTERS**.

JUST AS
YOUR SCIENCE AND
CHURCHES ONCE DEMONIZED
THOSE WITH COMMON BIRTH
DEFECTS OR MENTAL
ILLNESS.

AND YET, WE
STILL VALIANTLY RISKED
OUR LIVES TO **FIGHT** FOR
YOU. THE VERY SAME NATIONS
WHO HAVE **HUNTED** US
AND DENIED US
HAVEN.

AND
TOGETHER...
WE WON.

AND WHAT
DID MY PEOPLE
RECEIVE IN **RETURN**
FOR THEIR PIVOTAL
ROLE IN THIS
VICTORY?

THEY WERE
SLAUGHTERED
WHERE THEY STOOD
BEFORE THE DUST HAD
EVEN SETTLED.
BETRAYED BY ONE
WHO FOUGHT BY
THEIR SIDE.*

THE AVENGER
KNOWN AS **BLADE**.
A NOTORIOUS BUTCHER
OF MY PEOPLE, WHO
HAS REPEATEDLY
VOWED **GENOCIDE**
AGAINST US.

I ASK YOU...
IS **THIS** THE WORLD
WE FOUGHT TO
SAVE FROM
KNULL?

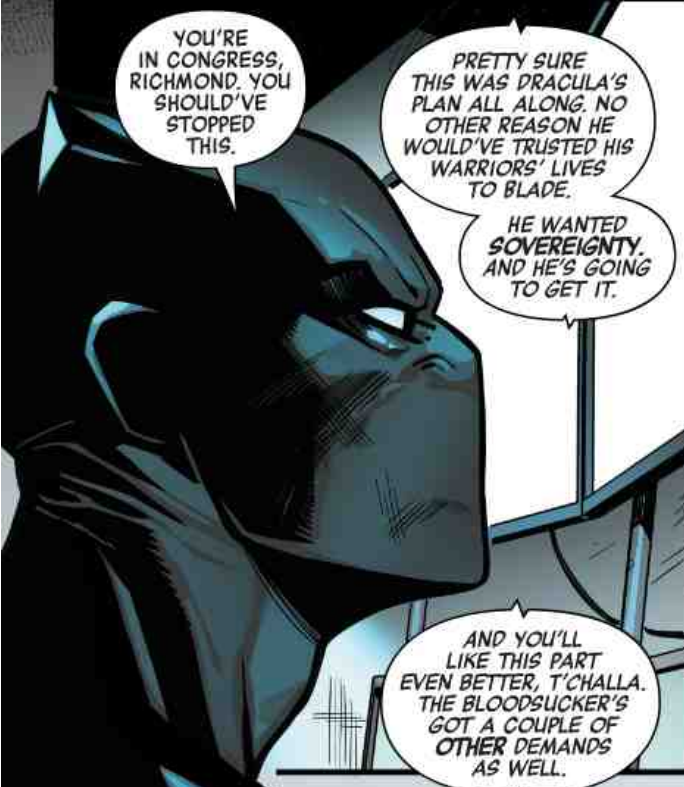


REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE MIGHTIEST
NATIONS OF THE EARTH,
HEAR ME NOW.

THIS IS A
TIME FOR **REBUILDING**.
A TIME TO HONOR ALL
THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR
LIVES IN THIS GREAT WAR
AGAINST THE **FASCISM**
OF DARK GODS.

ALL MY
PEOPLE ASK FOR
NOW IS THE CHANCE
TO ENJOY THAT VERY
FREEDOM THEY FOUGHT
SO VALIANTLY TO
PRESERVE.

WE WANT
A COUNTRY OF
OUR OWN. HERE IN
THIS LAND WE HAVE
RECLAIMED FROM
RADIOACTIVE
RUIN.



YOU'RE
IN CONGRESS,
RICHMOND. YOU
SHOULD'VE
STOPPED
THIS.

PRETTY SURE
THIS WAS DRACULA'S
PLAN ALL ALONG. NO
OTHER REASON HE
WOULD'VE TRUSTED HIS
WARRIORS' LIVES TO BLADE.

HE WANTED
SOVEREIGNTY.
AND HE'S GOING
TO GET IT.

AND YOU'LL
LIKE THIS PART
EVEN BETTER, T'CHALLA.
THE BLOODSUCKER'S
GOT A COUPLE OF
OTHER DEMANDS
AS WELL.



YOU'RE
*E#@ JOKING,
RIGHT?



I'M AFRAID NOT. HE'S DEMANDING A SEAT ON THE U.N. COUNCIL FOR HIS SON, XARUS, THE **SHADOW COLONEL**.

THE ONE WHOSE **HEAD** I CUT OFF?

BLOOD DELIVERIES FROM THE RED CROSS TO FEED HIS STARVING PEOPLE. AND THE RELEASE OF ALL VAMPIRIC **"POLITICAL PRISONERS."**

INCLUDING THE DEMONIC **HELLHOUND** WE'VE HAD LOCKED IN OUR BRIG SINCE OUR ENCOUNTER WITH HIS **LEGION OF THE UNLIVING**.

WITHERED OLD FANGER PLAYED US.



THEY AIDED THE WORLD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST KNULL. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE KILLED THEM.

THEY'RE **VAMPIRES!**

IF ONE FOX KILLS ANOTHER, IT AIN'T BECAUSE IT'S PROTECTING THE HENHOUSE! IT JUST WANTS THE CHICKENS FOR **ITSELF!**



LET THEM HAVE THEIR COUNTRY. AT LEAST I'LL KNOW WHERE THEY'RE AT NEXT TIME I GO TO **KILL 'EM ALL**.

THAT WOULD BE A DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST AN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED NATION ON THE PART OF THE **AVENGERS**.



NO, IT WOULD BE A VAMPIRE HUNTER DOING WHAT I WAS **BORN** TO DO. BUT LET ME CLEAR UP ANY TROUBLES FOR YOU AND YOUR PRETTY AVENGERS, CHIEF.

I **QUIT.**



THERE'S
ANOTHER **OPTION**
HERE.

AIN'T
FILING MY
FANGS OFF FOR
NOBODY.

LOOK
AFTER YOURSELF,
BOY-THING.

DRACULA'S
DEMANDS WILL BE
MET. BUT AS KING OF
WAKANDA, THERE'S THE
CHANCE I COULD MAKE
A FEW OF MY
OWN.



WE'LL
REQUIRE THEY
FEED ONLY ON
SYNTHETIC BLOOD.
I HAVE SHIPMENTS
READY TO GO, AS
INTERNATIONAL
AID.

AND WE'LL
DEMAND
SOMETHING
ELSE AS
WELL.

WHICH
WOULD BE
WHAT,
EXACTLY?

IT
WOULDN'T
REQUIRE YOU TO
LEAVE THE AVENGERS.
NOT PERMANENTLY
AT LEAST. WE'RE
GOING TO NEED
YOU.

AND I
CAN SEE
IT IN YOU,
ERIC...



...YOU
NEED THIS
TOO.

I KNOW
HOW IMPORTANT
IT IS TO YOU THAT
YOU'RE HERE. YOU
SHOW THE WORLD, YOU
SHOW YOUR OWN
PEOPLE...

...THEY DON'T
HAVE TO BE LIKE
DRACULA.



THEY
CAN BE LIKE
YOU.

THEY
CAN BE A
HERO.

WHAT THE
HELL'S THE
DEMAND?



UM,
HELLO?



ECHO, RIGHT?
OR SHOULD I...
CALL YOU
PHOENIX?

BEST STICK
TO ECHO. OR
MAYA.

THE BLACK
PANTHER'S TESTING
WILL DECIDE IF I'M
TO CONTINUE TO BE
THE PHOENIX OR
NOT.

PRETTY
SURE YOU
GET TO DECIDE
THAT.

THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT
BE GETTING
HUNGRY.

I KNOW
T'CHALLA
SOMETIMES
FORGETS
THAT THE
REST OF US
NEED TO EAT.



THANK YOU.
WE'RE ON
BREAK. BUT I
DIDN'T WANT
TO WANDER
FAR.

I KNOW.
I STILL GET
LOST IN THIS
PLACE.

IT'S NOT
THAT.

EVERYONE
HERE...IS
AFRAID OF
ME.

EVEN
THE BLACK
PANTHER.

THOR
WON'T
EVEN LOOK
AT ME.



AND I CAN
UNDERSTAND WHY.
I KNOW WHAT THE
PHOENIX HAS DONE
IN THE PAST. THE
WORLDS THAT
HAVE FALLEN.

IT
SHOWS ME
IN THE FIRE.
EVERY TIME I
CLOSE MY
EYES.

I'VE
DECIDED
IT MIGHT BE
WISE IF I DIDN'T
SLEEP ANYMORE.



COOL.
I'M A NIGHT
OWL TOO.

ROBERTO REYES.
YOU'RE THE ONLY
AVENGER WHO ISN'T
FRIGHTENED BY ME.
WHY IS THAT?

BECAUSE
I KNOW THAT
WHAT YOU SEE IN
THAT FIRE...THAT'S
NOT YOU.



WE ONLY JUST MET. WHY WOULD YOU THINK FOR A SECOND YOU KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT ME? YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT MISTAKES I'VE MADE IN THE PAST.

MMM, I COULD PROBABLY GUESS A FEW. BECAUSE I BET I MADE SOME OF THE SAME DAMN ONES MYSELF.

I RECOGNIZE WHERE YOU'RE AT. I'VE LOOKED INTO THAT SAME SORTA FIRE.

OF THE *GHOST RIDER*?
THE PHOENIX... FEELS A KINSHIP WITH YOU.



"YEAH, I'M PRETTY SURE OUR PEOPLE GO WAY BACK."

"THERE'VE BEEN LOTS OF RIDERS LIKE ME OVER THE YEARS. EVEN MORE THAN THERE'VE BEEN PHOENIXES OR BLACK PANTHERS."



WE'RE EITHER THE HAND OF GOD OR A SLAVE TO THE DEVIL. DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK. BUT NO MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE, ONE THING'S CERTAIN.

NONE OF US WIND UP HAPPY. OR HEALTHY. OR PARTICULARLY SANE.



THE *SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE* IS THE KIND OF POWER THAT RIDES YOU HARD AND PUTS YOU UP WET. WET WITH *GASOLINE*.

DR. STRANGE STILL TELLS ME TO MY FACE HOW *CRAZY* I AM EVERY TIME I SEE HIM.

THEN WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING IT? HOW DO YOU KNOW THE POWER'S WORTH THE RISK?



I'M THE NEW GUY AROUND HERE, BUT THIS KING IN BLACK THING IS ALREADY PROBABLY THE *SIXTH* TIME I'VE HELPED SAVE THE WORLD.

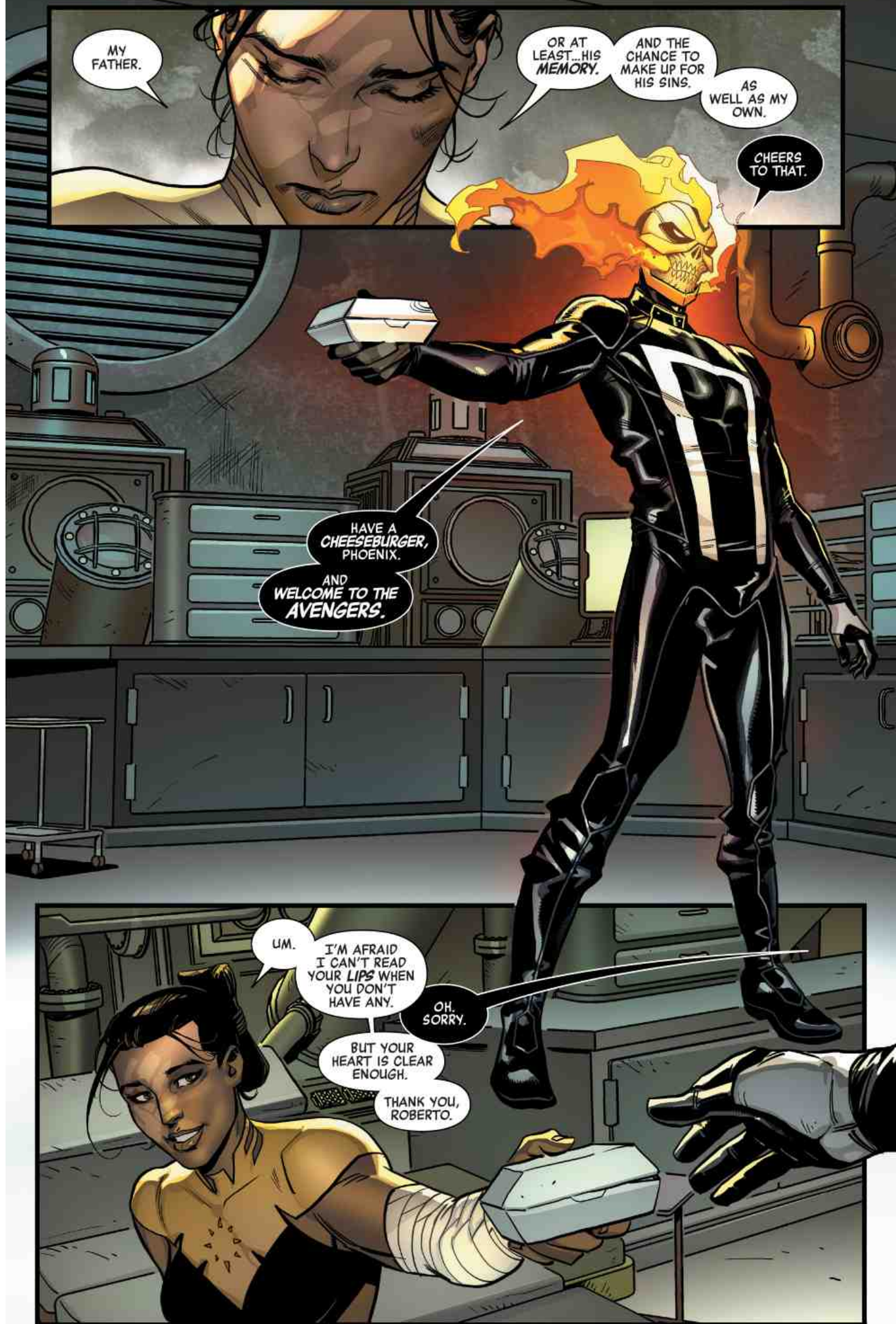
WHICH MEANS IT'S SIX TIMES I'VE STOPPED SOME MANIAC WHO WANTED TO KILL MY *LITTLE BROTHER*.



SO IF I GOTTA MELT MY OWN SKIN OFF NOW AND THEN JUST TO MAKE SURE GABE STAYS SAFE, WELL... I CONSIDER THAT A PRICE WORTH PAYING.

WOULDN'T YOU?

YOU GOT SOMEONE WORTH *BURNING* FOR, MAYA?



MY FATHER.

OR AT LEAST...HIS MEMORY.

AND THE CHANCE TO MAKE UP FOR HIS SINS.

AS WELL AS MY OWN.

CHEERS TO THAT.

HAVE A CHEESEBURGER, PHOENIX.
AND WELCOME TO THE AVENGERS.

UM.

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T READ YOUR LIPS WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE ANY.

OH. SORRY.

BUT YOUR HEART IS CLEAR ENOUGH.

THANK YOU, ROBERTO.

DAYS LATER.

CAN
YOU BELIEVE
THIS?

UKRAINIAN
MILITARY LEFT THEM
AT THE BORDER. SEEMS
THE WORLD WAS MOVED
BY YOUR SPEECH,
LORD DRACULA.

AND
NOW THEY'RE
SENDING US THEIR
BLOOD.

FREELY.
AS GIFTS,
FROM ALL
ACROSS THE
WORLD.

HMM.
RATHER TAKES
THE FUN OUT OF
IT WHEN THEY
JUST **GIVE** IT
TO YOU.

FEED IT TO
THE STARVING
MASSES. TO
DEMONSTRATE
THEIR LORD'S
GENEROSITY.

THE REST OF
US WILL SOON
BE FEEDING...ON A
MUCH SWEETER
PRIZE.

MAYBE
SOONER THAN YOU
THINK, MY LORD. MY
RATS SAY WE'VE
GOT VISITORS.

YES, **RAT
BOMBER**, I
SMELL THEM
ALREADY.

"THE AVENGERS
ARE HERE."



WELCOME TO
THE VAMPIRE NATION.
I SEE YOU'VE RETURNED
THE MUTT WE'D
MISPLACED.

YEAH, GOOD
TO SEE YOU
TOO, BOSS.

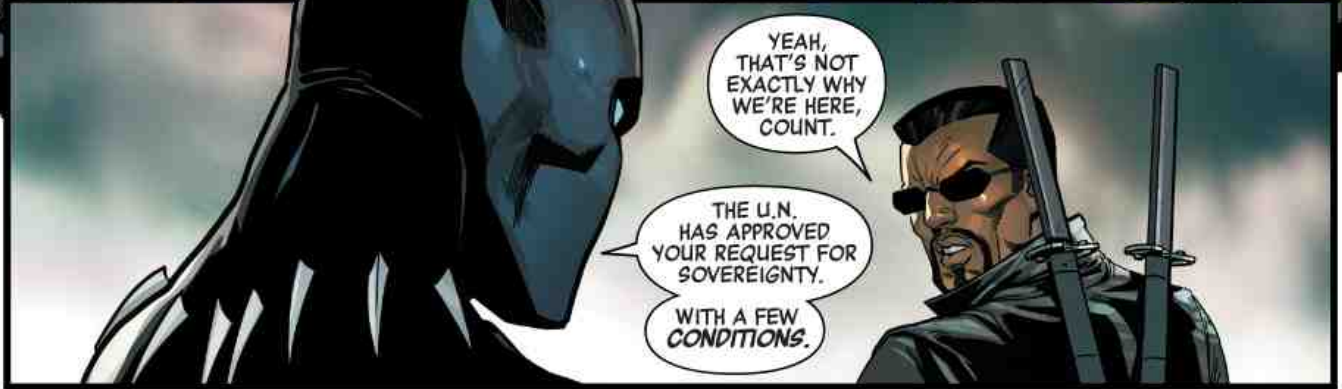
I WASN'T
REFERRING TO
YOU, SERGEANT.





THE BORDER GUARDS WILL TAKE POSSESSION OF THE PRISONER.

SO THAT **BLADE** CAN FACE VAMPIRE JUSTICE.



YEAH, THAT'S NOT EXACTLY WHY WE'RE HERE, COUNT.

THE U.N. HAS APPROVED YOUR REQUEST FOR SOVEREIGNTY.

WITH A FEW *CONDITIONS*.



WE CAN'T LET HIM DO THIS. THEY'LL TEAR HIM APART.



BLADE HAS SPENT HIS ENTIRE LIFE HUNTING PEOPLE WHO LITERALLY EXIST ON MURDER.

YEAH, I'D BE MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE VAMPIRES.



THAT...IS ONE HELL OF AN AVENGER.

AYE.

RRGH.

IT'S AN IMPORTANT DAY FOR ANYBODY WHO JOINS THIS CLUB. THE DAY YOU FIRST FIGURE OUT THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE ALL OVER THE UNIVERSE WHO *DESPISE* YOU.

PEOPLE WHO'VE NEVER
MET YOU BUT WANT
MORE THAN ANYTHING
TO SEE YOU DEAD.

I REJECT
YOUR CONDITIONS.
THIS IS MY COUNTRY.
CROSS THAT BORDER
AND YOU ARE SUBJECT
TO DRACULA'S
WILL.



YOU CAN EITHER LET THAT
KEEP YOU UP AT NIGHT,
WORRIED ABOUT THE NEXT
KING IN BLACK...

WAKANDA
DOES NOT SEE IT
THAT WAY, AND THE
REST OF THE WORLD
AGREES.

IF YOU
WISH TO JOIN THE
LEAGUE OF CIVILIZED
NATIONS, YOU WILL
NEED TO RESPECT
THE RULE OF LAW
AND ORDER.

LAW AND
ORDER? WHAT
THE DEVIL ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

...OR YOU CAN STICK TO
THE PROCESS. CONTROL
WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL.

HE'S
TALKING ABOUT
ME.

SO YOU GOT YOUR OWN SUCKHEAD
NATION. CONGRATULATIONS.
NOW GUESS WHAT COMES
WITH IT?

AND THE LAST
ONE STANDING OVER
YOU EACH SUNRISE WHEN
YOU CLOSE THE LID OF
THAT COFFIN?

YOUR PEOPLE
GET OUTTA LINE, THEY'LL
ANSWER TO A MAN WHO CARRIES
THE FULL AUTHORITY OF THE
AVENGERS AND THE
UNITED NATIONS.

YOU WAKE
UP AT DUSK, WHO
YOU THINK'S GONNA
BE THE FIRST FACE
YOU SEE?

ARE YOU
OUT OF YOUR
DAYWALKER
MIND?

NO, VLAD,
OLD BUDDY,
WHAT I AM...



...IS THE
SHERIFF
OF VAMPIRE
TOWN.

BUT
YOU CAN
CALL ME
BLADE.

"MR.
BLADE,
SIR."

AND WHETHER IT'S
YOUR LAST NIGHT
ON EARTH OR NOT...

...YOU LEAVE
IT ALL ON
THE FIELD.

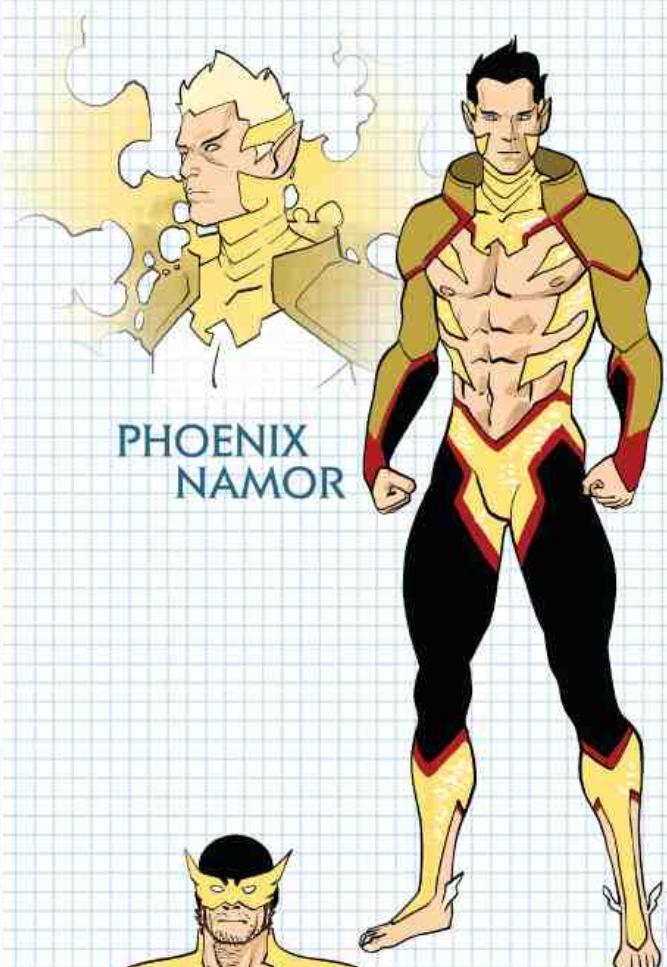
AND COUNT
YOURSELF
LUCKY IF YOU GET
TO GET UP THE
NEXT MORNING...

...AND DO
IT ALL OVER
AGAIN.



LUCA
MAR
ES
A





PHOENIX
NAMOR

A design for Phoenix Namor featuring a character with spiky blonde hair and a yellow, flame-like aura. Next to it is a full-body illustration of a muscular man in a yellow and black suit with red accents, standing barefoot.



PHOENIX
WOLVERINE



PHOENIX
CAPTAIN
AMERICA

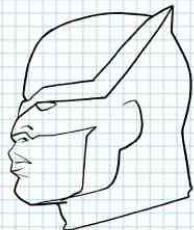
A design for Phoenix Captain America featuring a character in a yellow and red suit with white pants and a yellow helmet with a red visor. A small sketch of the character's head is also visible.



PHOENIX
HYPERION



PHOENIX
BLACK
PANTHER



PHOENIX
NIGHTHAWK



PHOENIX
BLACK KNIGHT



PHOENIX
AMERICAN
EAGLE



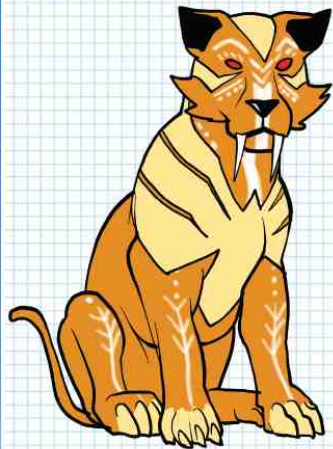
PHOENIX
RED WIDOW



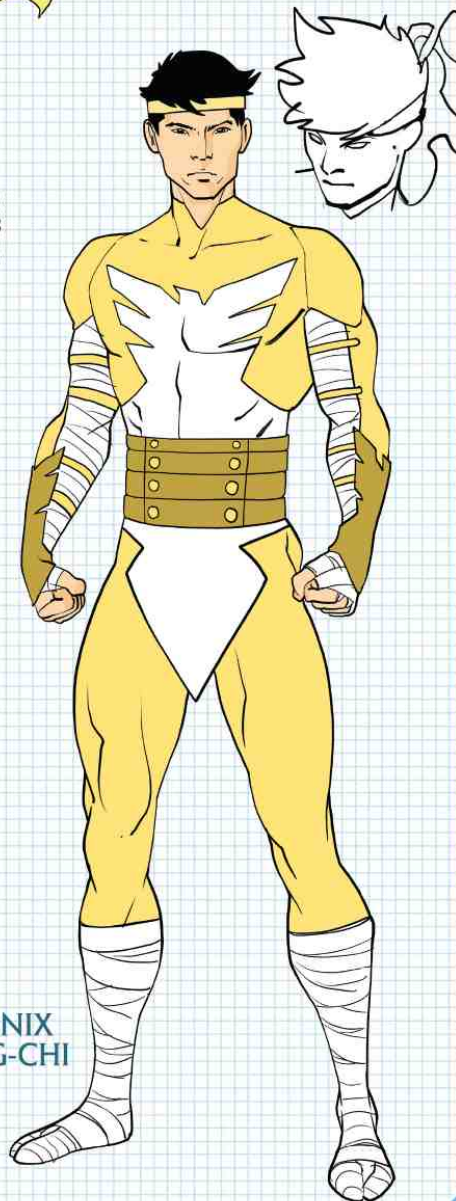
PHOENIX
SHANNA



PHOENIX
ZABU



PHOENIX
SHANG-CHI



PHOENIX
JANE FOSTER



PHOENIX
HULK



PHOENIX
ECHO





DUSTIN WEAVER
40-44 CONNECTING VARIANTS



DUSTIN WEAVER
40-44 CONNECTING VARIANTS PENCILS



TAURIN CLARKE
40 VARIANT



JOSHUA "SWAY" SWABY
40 VARIANT



JOSHUA CASSARA & MATTHEW WILSON
40 STORMBREAKERS VARIANT



ARTHUR ADAMS & RACHELLE ROSENBERG
40 HIDDEN GEM VARIANT



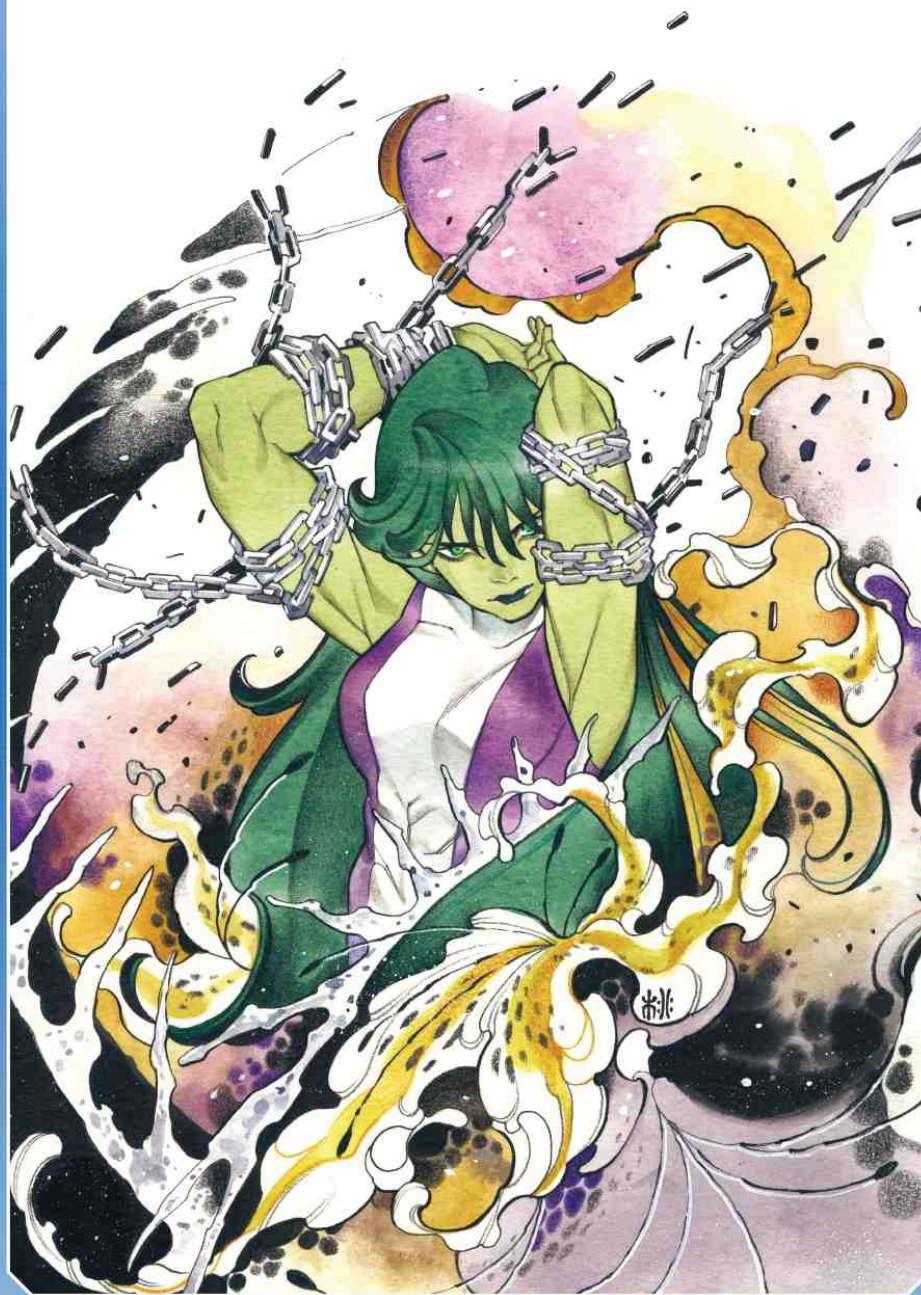
ERNANDA SOUZA
42 BLACK HISTORY MONTH VARIANT



JEN BARTEL
43 WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH VARIANT



MICHAEL CHO
43 TWO-TONE VARIANT



PEACH MOMOKO
44 VARIANT



GREG TOCCHINI
39 KNULLIFIED VARIANT



CARLOS PACHECO, RAFAEL FONTERIZ & RACHELLE ROSENBERG
45 HEROES REBORN VARIANT

"The Phoenix is an entity of light and darkness... Aaron understands this and paints a truly illustrative series of events with a fresh take of the Phoenix Force." — The Comic Book Dispatch

WHO WILL BE THE **ALL-NEW PHOENIX?!**

THE PLANET-BURNING COSMIC FIREBIRD known as the Phoenix Force has returned, and the Avengers are drawn into a globe-spanning battle for ultimate power! In the distant past of One Million B.C.E., one young girl's only crime was being born with red hair, and her destiny will change human history forever! In the present, the Phoenix Force searches the globe for a new avatar — and many of Marvel's most powerful heroes and villains are contenders! As the battle to wield the Phoenix grows ever bloodier and more desperate, Thor leads the Avengers in a fight to contain it. But the quest is complicated by the Thunder God's mysterious connection to the cosmic firebird! Plus: Blade pays a dark price in the fight against the King in Black!



